

how group leaders
can make better
use of individual
counseling
opportunities

FOR

- Y leaders
- camp counselors
- scoutmasters
- club advisors
- 4-H workers
- coaches
- church teachers
- playground directors
- youth center workers
- social agency volunteers

COUNSELING with YOUNG PEOPLE

by
C. Eugene Morris

2nd printing

An ASSOCIATION PRESS book

\$3.00

Whenever any one of the 10-million American men and women who lead youth groups is asked by a boy or girl for personal advice—that youth leader has become a "counselor."

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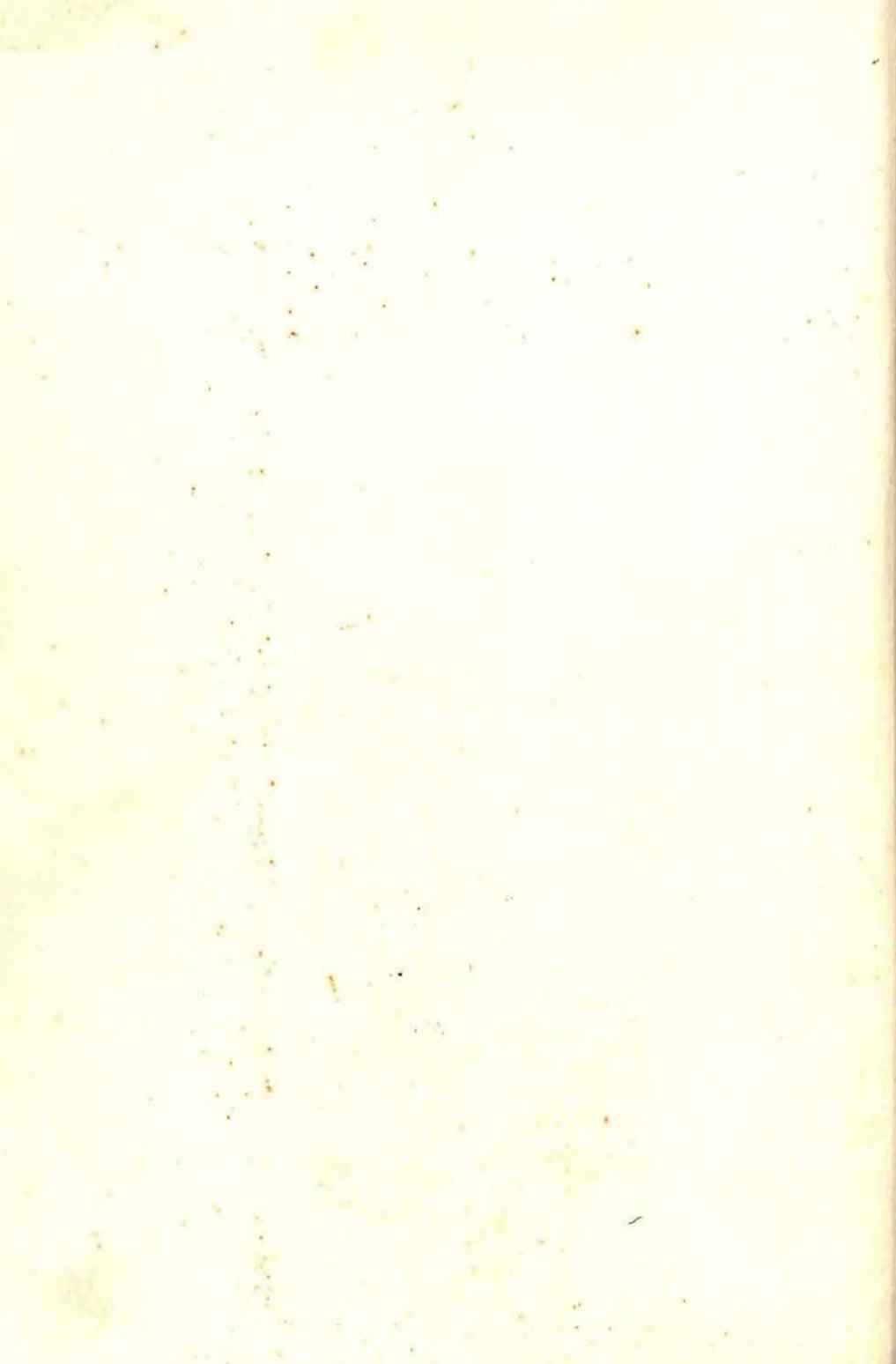
"Noteworthy for its clarity of presentation and logical organization, its emphasis on the role of the counselor as a friendly advisor rather than a judge, and its stress on the limitations of the lay counselor in technical areas. . . . Although it should find its greatest usefulness as a manual for the volunteer youth leader, much

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COUNSELING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE



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WITH
YOUNG PEOPLE

C. EUGENE MORRIS



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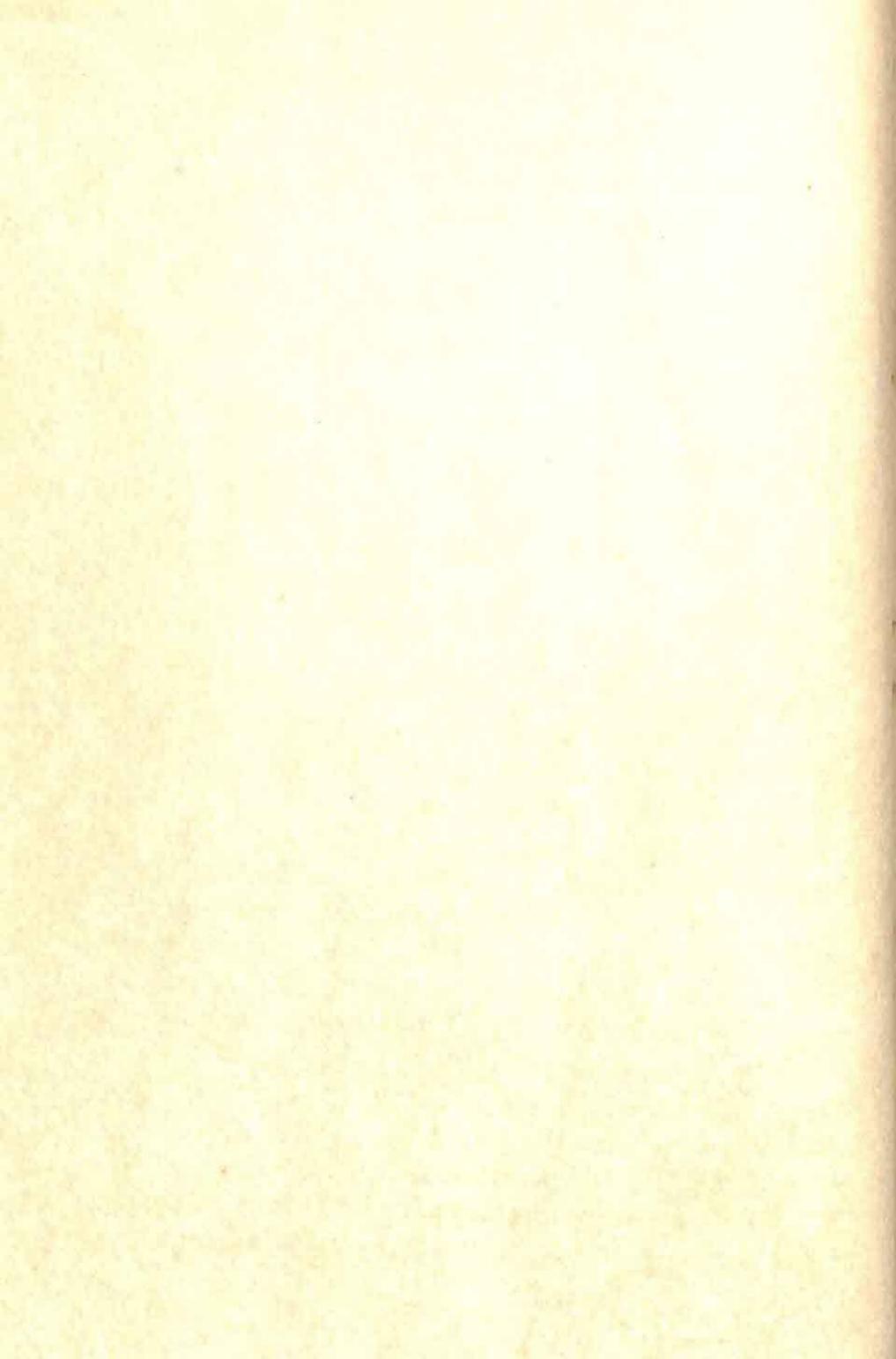
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Introduction

WHENEVER A GROUP of young people gets together with an adult adviser for any kind of organized activity over a period of time, personal counseling is almost certain to become part of the responsibility and opportunity of the leader. When a young person has a problem which he feels a need to talk over with an understanding, responsible adult, it is quite natural that he should turn to his group leader. Young people and group leaders alike testify that some of the most memorable and significant of their shared experiences have taken place in intimate chats when they have talked seriously about things that really matter.

This book is intended for use by those leaders who are working with young people and who are often called upon to act as advisers and counselors. All such leaders,

whether the role of counselor is thrust upon them or whether they eagerly embrace it, need to approach this role with understanding.

This book is therefore designed to help volunteer leaders of youth groups to become more alert and sensitive to individual needs and to approach the task of individual counseling with greater insight, understanding, and skill. It is for Sunday school teachers, club leaders, librarians, Red Cross workers, leaders of Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, 4-H clubs, and "Y" groups—anyone who is a volunteer worker in a social work, recreation, religious, or youth-serving organization.

Some of the chapters are personal in nature and are addressed to *you*, the leader; other chapters are addressed to leaders in general.

Acknowledgments

It is impossible to identify with appreciation all those people who have in one way or another made major contributions to my thinking through the years. Probably I have learned as much from young people as from any other source.

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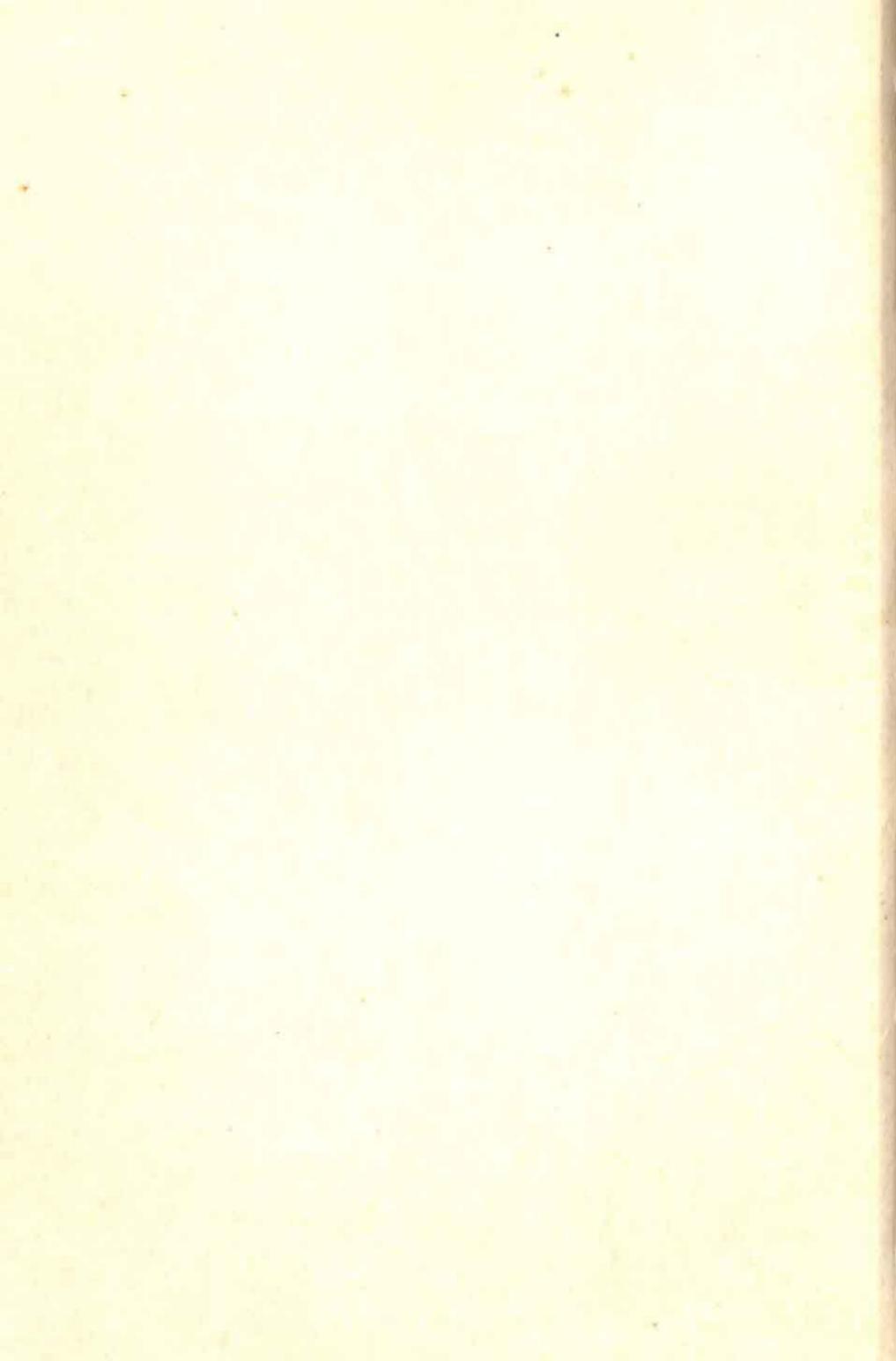
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C. EUGENE MORRIS

Springfield, Massachusetts

COUNSELING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE



CHAPTER ONE

Counseling Begins with Group Leadership

FOR THE LEADERS WHO WORK with youth groups, group work and counseling go hand in hand. Whatever a leader does to help a young person meet life situations more adequately is counseling; for the aim of any counselor is to help each youth who comes to him become better equipped to deal with current and future situations. A leader may often be asked to confer, to discuss problems, to act as a counselor—whether or not he wishes to take on that role.

Three Steps for the Group Leader

A leader who acts as a counselor is concerned with the past, the present, and the future of the young person seeking help. Future courses of action depend upon the individual's personal maturity and the particular cir-

cumstances of his present situation; the present situation, in turn, is conditioned by all that has gone before. Counseling involves a concern for the whole person.

To understand a young person's problem is an important first step in the counseling process. The leader must appreciate how the young person perceives the problem; its relationship to, or meaning for, him; and his interpretation of it as a life experience.

The first step to be taken by a group leader in the role of counselor is *to attempt to understand the young person with whom he is working*. Here is Joe. Joe comes to you visibly upset because his father will not let him have the family car for the group's moonlight picnic. What do you do first? You might label Joe's father as a hopeless antique. Would that be understanding Joe? On the other hand, you might agree with his father's judgment. Would that help you to understand Joe? One step toward understanding Joe would be to attempt to see the problem through his eyes.

Does Joe seem hurt, indignant, or resigned? What does having the car—or, in this case, not having it—seem to mean to Joe? What kinds of experiences has he been having lately with his family in general, and with his father in particular? To what extent is Joe overlooking the real reasons for his father's denial and substituting ones that sound plausible? How is Joe getting along with the other members of his crowd? Are Joe's present behavior and attitude similar to his reactions in other situations? Through such questions you can begin to understand Joe. You cannot help him if you do not understand him.

The leader's next step is *to try to help the young person understand himself*. You are not engaged in psychotherapy. You do not settle Joe flat on his back on a couch and encourage him to talk about the time he bit his father's finger in a fit of anger at the age of four. Nor do you necessarily try to get Joe to embark upon a lengthy self-analysis of his subjective feelings about his adolescent pimples. Joe may not even discuss with you his bitter disappointment when he failed to make the varsity team. On the other hand, as you talk with Joe—and with others like him—you may explore any or all of these areas. You will go as far as you can to help Joe, although the help you can give will depend both upon Joe's readiness to accept help and on your own training and experience. You will help him to an understanding of himself and his whole situation. Such self-understanding will provide the most constructive approach on Joe's part to the solution of the present problem.

The leader's third step is *to attempt to help the young person to help himself*. This general principle is based upon the recognition that Joe has the inherent capacity and urge to grow. This does not mean that Joe will have to solve his problems alone. Your task is to help him gain perspective on life goals and situations so that he can make realistic and wise choices. Through a process of reflection and exploration, Joe must make his own decisions. You, as Joe's leader and counselor, stand by to encourage Joe to help himself.

As a wise leader you will recognize that the problems of some young people are so deep-seated and their

situations so complex that you should not attempt a counseling relationship. In these cases you will refer the youth to specialists who are trained to handle particularly difficult situations. The counseling you do as a leader should be confined to young people who: (1) *are able to continue their ordinary routines of daily living*; (2) *do not manifest symptoms of mental illness*; (3) *are already making a reasonably good adjustment to their total life situations*. (The question of referrals is discussed in Chapter 9.)

A Good Leader First—Then a Counselor

Whether you are the coach of the Terrence Street Tigers or the adviser of Joe's young people's group at church, you are in an enviable position, for good group leadership often leads to effective lay counseling relationships.

If you are Joe's group leader, he is much more to you than a case history. In your regular contacts with him, you come to know him as a real person. Because of your interest in Joe and in the members of his group you begin to see his real strengths as a person. In the group setting you see Joe in many situations. As he works and plays with his fellows, he reveals some of his characteristic behavior patterns. His relative acceptance by the members of his group and his acceptance or rejection of them throw light on the way Joe views himself as a person. The way Joe regards his fellow members, particularly those who are more aggressive or more compliant than he, can be especially illuminating.

As you work with your group week after week, and as you converse with Joe and with his friends, you learn something about their individual interests. Informal chats and "bull sessions" often reveal the issues which are currently most important to young people. The points at which Joe tends to hide his real feelings by "clamming up" or indulging in horseplay or changing the subject are equally revealing as to the pressures which he feels the most. In addition to learning about Joe's capacities and interests and his characteristic adjustment patterns, you come to know his habitual moods and through long-term observation can begin to understand why he feels the way he does.

In the group setting, not only do you become acquainted with Joe as a person, but also Joe has the opportunity to become well acquainted with you. Even though he may not be consciously aware of the fact, he will be sizing you up as a person, and in doing so he will also be influenced by the reactions of his fellow group members. However, when he weighs his opinion of you as his group leader and possible counselor, he will probably be most influenced by the way he feels you have treated him thus far.

If, in Joe's opinion, you have been a competent, thoughtful, and sensitive group leader, one who has shared deeply and richly in the group life, you will have overcome one of the biggest hurdles in counseling —Joe will be able to trust you. And mutual understanding and trust *must* be established before you can help Joe.

The Leader Establishes a Group Climate

The leader can contribute much to the growth of members of the group as he carries out his organization's objectives, works toward the specific group goals, and develops the individual interests of the members. In order to realize these goals and interests, the leader strives to establish a climate in which individual and group growth can flourish.

These are characteristics of the healthy group climate toward which the leader works:

1. *Mutual acceptance of the group members.* This is probably the first aim of the competent leader. If Joe has no use for Barry or Barry can barely endure Joe's presence, both boys will be injured as persons unless this situation is remedied. When strong cliques are formed on the basis of the "in's" versus the "out's" or the "have's" versus the "have-not's," the group will no longer provide the best setting for the development of personality.

2. *Democratic action.* When the same faithful few, or the same aggressive minority, always initiate and carry out the group projects, development of the remaining members is curtailed. A group which habitually plays follow the leader may be expected to fold up sooner or later. Only the group in which everybody has a share in planning and implementation can provide the best climate for individual and group growth.

3. *Accomplishment and productivity.* These characteristics are essential. Joe and his friends must feel that

the group is getting somewhere, or else the group will eventually fall apart. At times, efficiency and achievement must be sacrificed for the sake of democratic participation. However, a group where everybody has his say, but where nothing goes beyond the talking stage, is doomed to fail, unless, of course, discussion is its chief aim. There must be group decisions as a basis for group action. From the point of view of mental hygiene, this sense of accomplishment may make all the difference in Joe's further growth as a person. For the thrill of personal and group achievement provides many a young person with the needed confidence to work on more vital and far-reaching areas of personal development.

4. *Richness in opportunities for the examination and further development of personal attitudes and values.* If Joe is to change as a person, his attitudes and values must be explored and enlarged in ways which seem natural and suitable to him. His participation as a group member is evidence of his hope for this kind of experience. The leader therefore encourages Joe, and each of the others, to express his ideas without fear of ridicule or rebuff. The leader can tactfully help the group to ask what meaning and moral value each new program or idea will have for them. This way of looking at things leads the group to think about the Hebrew-Christian values which are at the heart of all character-building agencies. Such a development must emerge out of the desires and needs of the group; attempts at manipulation or contrived results on the part of the leader invariably backfire.

5. *Expectancy of change.* Young people have plenty

of ideas which create new and better ways of working together. As a result, Joe and his associates will find themselves stretching toward new horizons. Parallel growth of individuals in the group is also encouraged by the desire for or the expectancy of change. This helps Joe and his friends to add up their old and new experiences into something that makes sense, thus increasing their personal integration.

6. *A balanced program.* The members of any group possess a variety of skills and interests. Group projects, when broadly conceived, give each member an opportunity to find outlets for his unique combination of talents and abilities. In the process of carrying on the group's activities each young person is thereby able to point to "my" share in "our" enterprise.

7. *Emotional balance.* This factor is an important consideration. As Joe begins to feel at home in his intimate, co-operative group, he gradually begins to let down the barriers. He begins to speak of his dreams, his hopes, his fears—perhaps even of his guilt feelings. Such a catharsis is good within limits. However, the leader must be careful to keep such spontaneous revelations within proper bounds. No young person should be allowed to lose face with his friends. The explosive release of pent-up feelings and conflicts can be catastrophic, both for Joe and for the group. Only the most skilled therapist attempts to deal in a group situation with deep unconscious feelings or violent expressions of emotion. Moreover, the therapist will have instituted many controls in order to be sure that the group and their emotions do not run riot. A group leader avoids

mass confessinals and strives for a happy balance in emotional expression.

As the leader achieves these goals in group climate, he becomes better fitted for counseling with individuals who may seek him out for that purpose.

Young People Like Good Leaders

The competent group leader and the understanding counselor have much in common, and the personal qualities most needed in group leadership and in individual counseling are the very ones most valued by young people. They appreciate leaders and counselors who:

1. Have an underlying regard for the inherent dignity and worth of every human being
2. Help make people feel wanted and needed
3. Treat everyone fairly
4. Enjoy their associations with young people
5. Have deep and enlightened personal convictions, but do not pretend to know more than they do
6. Encourage individuals and groups to work through their own problems and, where possible, to arrive at their own decisions
7. Are sensitive to the needs of young people and respect their confidences
8. Are stable and mature
9. Keep up-to-date in their thinking
10. Are available and accessible.

Such leaders do good group work within a good group climate; for they show understanding of the basic needs and problems of youth, and young people turn to them for help.

CHAPTER TWO

Young People Have Many Needs

IMPORTANT REQUIREMENTS for a leader who is called upon to act as a counselor are the ability to recognize the basic physical, emotional, and social needs of young people, the ability to appreciate their desire for self-realization.

The leader can learn much about these needs from firsthand observation of the youth who seeks his help, either in the group or through conversation with him. All behavior points to underlying personal needs and satisfactions. Whenever a person shows signs of inner tension or whenever his behavior suddenly shifts into new patterns, an observer knows that there has been some change in the underlying needs. No counselor can recognize all the surface indications of inner tensions, for each youth functions in his own way. However, the

more the leader knows about a person, the more effective he is apt to be as counselor.

The alert leader knows his group well enough to recognize surface danger signals and the small distress flags that are indicative of unfulfilled inner needs. Further, in order to know some of the reasons for the appearance of such signals the leader must keep in mind the basic needs of most people in our society.

Their Physical Needs

Food and water, fresh air and sunshine, adequate clothing and shelter—these are basic physical needs for everyone. For many young people, however, malnutrition remains a persistent problem.¹ Every leader knows members of his group who start the day with a skimpy breakfast, or perhaps with none at all. Observation of living quarters, recreational facilities, wearing apparel, will reveal that in the daily living of many young people fundamental needs are not met.

All living organisms have, too, a need for rest and for relaxation. Yet, because of the economic and social pressures under which many young people live, opportunities for relaxation may be limited.

Look at your own group. Here is a youth who works as a delivery boy after school. Each night, he rushes home for dinner after his job is finished, then dashes off for basketball practice. Not until sometime after ten o'clock does he settle down to his heavy school assignments.

Here is a girl who is caught up in a round of activities

that fill every waking moment. Monday afternoon, she has a music lesson. On Tuesday, the Spanish club meets from three-thirty until dinner time. Wednesday afternoons, her sociology class usually takes a field trip. On Thursday afternoon of a typical week the decorations committee of which she is a member gets ready for the big dance to be held the following night. Friday afternoon after school the committee works frantically to complete its preparations. The affair itself lasts until midnight or later. On Saturday, she has chores to do at home. Perhaps she also helps with the shopping, or baby-sits in order to augment her allowance. Sunday, after church, the whole family drives sixty miles to visit a relative. What has happened to the girl's week? What opportunities has she or the delivery boy had for rest?

You may wonder how these young people can keep up the pace. They thrive on a schedule that is too fast for many of their troubled elders. The whirl of social activities, jobs, school, family life, may not necessarily overstrain their physical capacities. They are having fun and enjoying new experiences. However, many young people do need rest and easing of tensions. The observant leader watches his group for danger signals.

Even when rest and the other fundamental physical needs are adequately taken care of, a young person may not function properly from a biological standpoint. A girl may be labeled as a slow learner throughout her elementary school days until, belatedly, it is found that corrective glasses to improve her vision resolve the problem almost overnight. Defective hearing is often obscured by tendencies to daydream. Low-grade tempera-

tures, indicative of persistent systemic infection, sometimes pass unnoticed. The "lazy" youngster may be anemic, even though he looks healthy enough. The emotionally charged behavior of adolescence may be due to fairly serious glandular disturbance. Even the "imaginary" aches and pains of youth may be based upon some underlying ailment.

Unless each member of the group has had a thorough physical examination by a competent physician, you cannot assume that the young people with whom you work are physically healthy. Until you know the facts you dare not presume that the fundamental needs of life have been adequately filled. And as a wise counselor, you cannot overlook the possibility that the physical necessities may be a primary source of difficulty for the young people you seek to help.

Without due consideration of the physical causes for personal maladjustments, moreover, your counseling efforts may compound the underlying difficulty. As leader and counselor, you cannot attempt diagnosis or offer medical opinions, but you can recommend a physical checkup when a young person has not been examined recently by his physician.

Their Need for Self-Realization

Every healthy living thing has emotional and social needs, a demand for self-realization and for individual fulfillment. The caterpillar is destined to become a butterfly, and the migrant wildfowl can be depended upon to wing southward before the first hoarfrost. Human

beings, too, have a destiny to fulfill, and in the search for self-realization there are certain common needs which must be realized along the way. In each person there is a deep, insistent *need for exploration and for adventure*. This is especially true for youth. When a young person seems reluctant to attempt the new and untried and to explore the unknown, he causes surprise among his elders. Exploration and adventure—flavored with a dash of danger, imaginary or real—is an undeniable need of every healthy young person.

As a natural consequence of wholesome exploration, each person has *the need to be creative*. Creative expression involves more than the ability to play the piccolo or sketch a landscape or engage in any of the other fine arts. It is a process of broadening horizons and of discovering new relationships. One boy enjoys tinkering with his smelly chemistry set. Another spends hours with his beloved tropical fish. A young girl enthusiastically helps organize a Brownie troop. Another girl spends an hour each night on the telephone talking to her girl friend, with whom she has already spent most of the day. So varied are the ways young people engage in creative expression; and your own work as a group leader and as a counselor is one way in which you express your own creativity.

In the search for self-realization, each person has a *need to share his experiences*; for interpersonal contacts seem to represent the richest possible resources for personality development.² In the experience of the race, a life without contacts with other human beings becomes something less than human.³ The man held for

years in solitary confinement and the young lady who advertises for a roommate have one important thing in common—the need for companionship, the need to share with others. This is a universal need.

Each person has the *need for personal recognition*. It is a part of the deeper yearning of every human heart. The growth of cities and the expansion of industrial civilization are among the factors which depersonalize the lives of many. As people move around they may fail to establish roots. More and more, one's serial number, useful and practical for statistical purposes and government convenience, becomes as important as one's name. But no one wants to be merely a number. Each wants to be a person with a name—a person who is needed and wanted, who is recognized, who belongs.

Along with recognition, each person has a *need for status*. In a democratic society it could hardly be otherwise. In terms of status, we may go up or down. Thus, our universal need for status is allied with our unconscious fear of failure.⁴ For young people who have yet to try their wings, the problem may be more acute than for those adults whose status has become relatively more stable and well defined. Often, the roles assigned to youth are synonymous with fledgling activities. This sometimes makes teen-agers feel that they are "second-class" citizens with a status which allows them to partake of only the fringe benefits of our social order. However, through participation young people grow into maturity with its concomitant benefits, privileges, and responsibilities. They grow into status. For some young people the need for status overshadows other needs in

urgency and importance, but it is a part of each youngster's quest for self-realization.

Allied with the desire for status is the persistent *need to learn to live with authority*, for the problem of authority is with man from the cradle to the grave.⁵ Mere existence in any complex, highly organized society involves never-ending adjustments to authority in various forms. In fact, each individual must learn to deal realistically with authority at various levels, from the traffic officer's "stop" to the acceptance of scientifically established principles and culminating in a personalized concept of divine authority. Many young people seem to have the most difficulty in their relationship with people who wield authority or who symbolize authority. When such difficulties are pronounced, it may mean that the young person experienced a lot of personal frustration in his efforts to deal effectively with authority, either because he lacked love or suffered harshness.

The need for a sense of achievement is of great importance. Each person likes to think that he is doing something worth while and likes to look back now and again at the milestones of accomplishment which mark the road over which he has traveled. Without this sense of achievement, the road to fulfillment and self-realization which lies ahead will seem like a blind alley. Conversely, a satisfactory sense of achievement in one area tends to buoy us up and encourage progress in other directions as well. When young people have basically satisfying feelings of accomplishment in one field, they develop a capacity for self-realization in other fields.

Along with this need for a sense of achievement, each

person has a *need for a personal sense of direction*. For young people, the lack of a sense of direction may be due to either internal or external factors—or to a combination of the two.

Each person has a *need for personal commitment*. In the search for self-realization, this need is evident throughout life. As a child, as soon as self-identity is realized, "I" becomes the center of the universe. At this stage, parents are seen either as benefactors or as those who deprive the self of personal satisfactions. As he grows and gains experience, a young person usually acquires a working concept of the word "we." Through participation in various group activities, usually with those of his own age and sex, he becomes committed in some degree to the common goals toward which most of his friends are working. In adolescence, he begins to make generalizations on the basis of whole areas of life experience. In this way he begins to identify with the larger society of which he is a part, or he may begin to fight against society or run away from it. His area of personal commitment should expand; his capacity to deal with abstract concepts should increase; he should be able to identify with, and become committed to, the divine source of all self-realization. Thus it is that a sense of personal commitment becomes both a beacon and a barometer, by which each person can see and measure his relative degree of fulfillment and self-realization.⁶ If these progressive steps do not take place, the person may need help and counsel.

Wherever they may be on their journey toward self-realization, young people often hang out "help wanted"

signs when they are deprived of some of the basic satisfactions we have mentioned or have trouble meeting these needs in an integrated and satisfying way. The observant leader recognizes these signs and quietly offers his help, perhaps so quietly that the young person does not know it is being offered. Help can be accepted only if it is offered in a way that respects his deep desire for personal independence. It is this craving for independence that keeps him on the path toward greater personal fulfillment.

With these basic needs in mind, what are the practical implications for workers with youth? In the first place, it is highly inappropriate to look at behavior as a fact by itself. It is equally erroneous to judge behavior merely on the basis of adult standards. Individual conduct may at first glance appear to be utterly senseless from an adult point of view. It is only through an improved understanding of the motivations of youth, which in turn are based on deep persistent needs, that constructive approaches can be made to problems of behavior and personal adjustment.

The uninformed leader may try protest, preachments, or punishment. Such tactics prove relatively futile, and may aggravate the situation. It is only as these basic needs of youth are met that there can be hope for fundamental changes in the direction of improved life adjustment.

Jack, for example, is a late-maturing lad whose high-pitched voice is conspicuous in a group of boys his own age who long since have acquired the more basslike speech of manhood. In the heated competition of a

game of table tennis, the other boys spontaneously begin to mock his soprano-like shrieks. In an outburst of rage, Jack sends his paddle sailing across the room, and a decorative table lamp is shattered to bits. As his leader, what do you do then? The worker who is appreciative of Jack's need for acceptance and recognition by his fellows is likely to make a far more constructive approach to the problem!

Thus, whenever young people appear to be in difficulty, the wise leader looks not merely at what happens, but at why it may have happened. What about the matter of personal health? The needs for exploration and adventure, as well as for creative expression? The yearning for individual status and recognition? The desire for a sense of achievement? The necessity to learn to live with authority? The often unconscious need for a personal sense of direction and commitment? In each of these areas, workers with youth may find important clues for understanding behavior. And, through improved insight and perspective, begin to take more positive steps in assisting young people to help themselves.



CHAPTER THREE

How a Person Grows

AN UNDERSTANDING of human growth helps the leader who works with young people. The more the leader learns about this and the better he observes children and youth in the process of growing, the better group leader and counselor he will be.

Each person is a product of the contributions of nature and of nurture. From the moment of his conception, his sex, color of eyes and hair, bone structure, and other physical attributes have been determined. Each parent, as he passes on the genes and chromosomes of the preceding generations, probably also passes on certain constitutional predispositions with respect to intelligence, temperament, and relative susceptibility to specific diseases.

Prenatal factors may significantly affect the child's subsequent development. If the mother's health is poor, the physical stamina of the infant may be materially

influenced. In the words of Merry and Merry, "while no direct maternal impressions are transmitted from mother to child, any factors which interfere with maternal health may have an adverse effect upon the development of the fetus."¹

At the same time, there are definite limits to the characteristics which can be uncontestedly attributed to heredity. No one group of people has a monopoly on virility, intelligence, adaptability, sensitivity, or any other human characteristic. Nature has no respect for socioeconomic distinction or for skin color. Her gifts are distributed without discrimination.

Whatever his heritage, nature and nurture become partners in the child's growth. As the biological processes unfold and the infant learns better control over his bodily movements, environmental pressures assert themselves. The responses which others make to the cries of the helpless infant have an effect upon his developing personality; whether or not a child is wanted and cherished makes a great difference in the parental care he receives and in his consequent sense of well-being.

The opportunities available to him and to his family are also of tremendous importance. The social class of which he is a member is of vital significance. If he is a middle-class youngster of American or Western European stock, his parents will probably make greater demands on him than would parents in other social groups around the world. If the child's parents are social climbers, their demands may be even more difficult for him to meet. The time and place in which he lives, the status

of the family and of the community, his functioning intelligence—these, too, are vital factors.

Fewer delinquents are found among children whose parents enjoy and love them, regardless of financial status, race, or environment.² The study which Glueck and Glueck have made on juvenile delinquency indicates that:

It is clear from the evidence that in the home and in the parent-child relations are to be found the crucial roots of character which make for acceptable or unacceptable adjustment to the realities of life and society.³

There is a third factor, the child himself. As he grows, the child develops his own self-concept—his idea of himself as a person—and this self-concept is founded upon the inner meanings and interpretations which life has come to hold for him.

Characteristics of Growth

Human growth is characterized by the acquirement of experience, assimilation of past experience, pauses for rest, regression to more infantile or primitive or less educated ways, and advancement. There is no definite time or pattern in these phenomena of growth, for the pattern of growth is different with each individual.

A three-months-old baby kicks and throws his arms about in random movement. In a short time he begins to make cooing and gurgling noises, and he practices these sounds. When he learns to wiggle his fingers he is fascinated by the achievement. And when the baby

learns to pull himself up by the bars of his crib or play pen, he performs this accomplishment repeatedly. At each stage of his physical development he persists until he is satisfied with his progress. Captivated by each new achievement, and encouraged by a responsive audience, the baby becomes a more vigorously expressive personality with every passing day.

This random movement and subsequent perfecting and differentiation through combinations necessary for achieving objectives continue throughout the person's life whether his goal is a bright red ball, a date with a certain attractive girl, or a bout with the blight which has hit his favorite rose bushes.

As a person grows he will always tend to repeat those performances which meet with greatest success, which are greeted with approval and recognition, and which give him the greatest personal inner satisfaction. In accordance with these characteristics of growth, his energies and efforts will be focused always upon specific goals. All his behavior has some meaning, however difficult those meanings may be to fathom. He is becoming a person with a purpose, and his life presents an endless series of problem-solving situations.

As he tackles the successive problems growing out of his inner needs and the expressions of those needs which are permissible, possible, and desirable in his environment, he will always be influenced by the past—and the past looms larger with each week and month and year. In each situation he will make the response which has proved most successful in relieving his inner tensions,

with their allied rewards, deprivations, and punishments.

It is fallacious to assume that as the person develops biologically, psychologically, and in social awareness his progress will be in a straight line. Regardless of nurture, nature decrees that personal growth in all areas of experience shall be in waltz time rather than in the tempo of a grand march.⁴ For example, observe a young child's table manners. First, he slings his spoon around and slops his food. Eventually, he learns to manipulate the loaded spoon successfully, without spilling the food or smearing his face. Just when the child's mother is anxious to show him off to a visiting relative, he promptly forgets the whole trick, refuses to have anything to do with the spoon, and dives into his food with both hands. He is not being spiteful or funny. The child is passing through a stage of human growth. He advances, he pauses for rest or assimilation, he returns to more primitive modes of thought, feeling, and behavior, and soon he advances again.

This typical regression to earlier behavior patterns may encompass extremely wide time spans. Even adults at times behave immaturely. In times of stress—especially when confronted by new or threatening situations—an adult tends to revert to a more infantile or primitive expression. This trend operates in two ways. If the situation is catastrophically threatening, the person feels a need to go back and touch base.⁵ At such times, he may long to be once more the carefree kid on his first fishing trip with his father, or the protected, hurt child who found comfort on his mother's lap. If, how-

ever, he has some unhealed wounds resulting from earlier, unsuccessful life battles, the old, inadequate ways will reassert themselves. If in the person's childhood his father was given to temper tantrums and physical violence, he may be immobilized by fear, even as a young adult, when he encounters similar behavior on the part of his superiors.

In their informative volume *Coming of Age*, Esther Lloyd-Jones and Ruth Feder point out yet another characteristic of growth which may be important for the boy if he meets with difficulties of the type mentioned here. According to their study, if a person has not been able to satisfy any one of the basic needs common to individuals living in our society, he can never be a whole person until he has rectified this deficiency.

As a person grows he is concerned from time to time with the unresolved problems of his childhood. A man of mature years may still have problems left over from his adolescence, and any further development will depend upon his ability to deal adequately with that unfinished business.⁶

Because of individual differences, not every young person will demonstrate the same type of personal growth, nor will all development proceed according to the same rate of progress. And it is not always easy to detect major changes within a relatively short span of time.

Whenever a child or youth grows as a person, even the subtle changes in personality are manifested in the focus and direction in which his energies are expended. A boy may suddenly develop a keen interest in sections

of the newspaper other than the sports page. A girl may surprise us with her newly developed enthusiasm for children of nursery school age.

Some of these shifts will be quite spectacular; other indications will be barely perceptible. Not every change in focus and direction will be permanent. A boy may become enthusiastic over combustion engines, but before the year is over he may be just as exhilarated over sailboats or carrier pigeons or archaeological expeditions. All these minor advances and interesting side excursions, however, reveal the person more clearly. From the kinds of experiences which he seems to enjoy most, it may be possible to deduce the general direction in which he is growing.

The Climate of Growth

It is exceedingly important that a group leader help create the conditions in which a young person's maximum growth can be realized. The climate most favorable to growth is that in which the young person is encouraged to take the adventurous step forward that is essential to all personal development. There are many requirements for a climate in which youth can develop to the fullest:

1. If a youth is to be expected to accept the adventure and to be motivated purposefully in any realm of action, the *climate should provide goals that are within his range of understanding, interests, and abilities*. If a boy is failing in spelling, it is futile to bait him with promises or to threaten him with calamity if he does

not make an "A" on his next report card. If he is having trouble making friends, he cannot be expected to make much progress with the neighborhood bully next door. The goal must appear to be achievable, and the game must be worth the effort—capable of producing at least some immediate satisfaction or reward.

2. *The climate should provide an area of growth that has some relationship to previous experience.* This does not mean that the youth should shy away from new experiences, but it does mean that the group leader will try to relate present experiences in the group activities to the youth's past experiences.

3. *The climate should provide goals which are related to the problems of the present and have some use for the future.* When a youth is preoccupied with the prospect of being drafted into military service, he may not be ready for a course in table etiquette or for a tranquil study of the community life of the honeybee. To him, such matters are irrelevant to his life situation and appear to be of no use as he contemplates basic training or boot camp.

4. *The climate should provide goals that are challenging and not too easily attainable.* A young person who is smug and self-satisfied in any area of his experience does not grow in that area. It is only when he is inwardly challenged by his relative lack of proficiency or accomplishment that he will take the step toward future growth.

5. *The climate for continued growth in any direction is characterized by incompleteness.* After a full-course dinner, a person is hardly tempted to hustle out for a

hamburger. Unless there is an expectancy of more excitement to come, he may not finish the novel he is reading. When he is stymied in a blind-alley, routine job, his production may become static, and eventually wane. If further growth is to take place, there must always be that vital urge for completion.

6. *The climate of growth, ideally, offers opportunities for personal sharing.* There is no worth-while development or exploration which does not benefit through one's sharing it with others. Even the most self-centered, egoistic individual—including the solitary hermit—enjoys the comforting knowledge that he is not the only member of the race to follow a particular path. Much better than such narrow lanes, however, is the broad highway of gregarious, outgoing, mutual interest, where personal sharing fosters individual growth.

7. *The climate conducive to personal growth is one in which wholesome attitudes may be developed.* A person's inherent desire for oneness and for unity is not limited to himself alone. Experiences which afford him more satisfying relationships with God and with his fellow man bear fruit in terms of more wholesome attitudes. These wholesome attitudes toward self and others in turn encourage additional excursions and new accomplishments in all areas of his growth as a personality.

8. *In an ideal climate for personal growth, the youth must become acquainted with the limits imposed by his life situation*—what Nathaniel Cantor has termed the “stable or given.”⁷ Quite early in life, a child learns that water is wet and that fire burns. Quite forcibly,

sometimes, he becomes aware that his rights end at the beginning of the other fellow's nose. It is important that he increasingly understands what other people expect of him. He needs to know about stop signs, placed there because of the hazards of dangerous thoroughfares. He needs to learn that certain controls on his activities are temporarily necessary in the interests of safety and sanity—and that the aim of such controls is to provide a brake until he matures sufficiently to exercise self-control and self-determination in life situations.

9. *The climate of growth must include the opportunity for the young person to identify himself with a more adult and admired person.* The child learns in part by imitation; as he grows, his attention centers on specific persons whom he likes, admires, may even worship. As an intermediate step in his growth he seeks the friendship and esteem of these persons, just as he must have the esteem of his friends and associates.

Helping Young People to Help Themselves

Within broad limits, each stage of growth in the developmental patterns imposes its own demands. Child psychology texts pay a great deal of attention to age-level characteristics and to the specific tasks with which young people are confronted at successive stages. One of the most concise and informative reviews of developmental tasks is to be found in a monograph by Robert J. Havighurst.⁸

These tasks do not usually appear suddenly but have been gradually and often imperceptibly introduced

since the earliest childhood years. For some adolescents, however, one or more of these common developmental tasks are quite suddenly catapulted into the foreground of conscious awareness. In order to help young people to help themselves deal with their problems, the group leader should be able to anticipate, recognize, and point out the common tasks with which adolescents are confronted. If these demands are maturely faced, the youth will meet the challenges and responsibilities of adulthood more successfully. Some common tasks are:

1. To accept himself for what he is and what he may become
2. To learn to live with his parents
3. To get along with members of his own age and sex
4. To develop happy relations with the opposite sex, as a preface to normal, happy friendships and, later, marriage and homemaking
5. To learn to get along with and experience a feeling of kinship with all people
6. To become increasingly aware of the world of work, and to prepare for an appropriate vocation
7. To develop an awareness of contemporary social issues and a deep sense of personal responsibility as a significant member of democratic society and of the world community
8. To lay the foundations for a philosophy of life, including the identity and choice of those values by which his future life will be governed
9. To cultivate interests and skills which will provide channels for recreational and avocational pursuits through the years to come.

Not every young person with whom the leader works will achieve mastery of such an imposing list of tasks. Indeed, it is questionable whether anyone ever is completely successful in this respect. The job of a group leader and counselor is to accept the young person wherever he is in his development and to assist him to develop more completely.

Toward Understanding Personality

AS A LEADER LOOKS at the young people he knows, he sees something distinctive about each one which makes up his personality. The leader who is aware of and who explores the individual differences of the young people in his group is a better counselor when he must act as counselor.

In one group there may be a thin boy and a plump boy; a girl who is the freckle-faced tomboy of her crowd and a girl who is as prim and proper as her starched gingham; a boy who is dull at school but popular, and one who loves books but shuns people; a seventeen-year-old who is already a black sheep and another who is the pride and joy of his family; a girl who responds to masculine attention with a come-hither gleam in her eye and another who says she hates boys; a young man

who knows what his future work will be and one who plays around with a new career idea every week.

Individual variations are inevitable, for each person in the group comes from a different environment. Even members of the same family grow up in different environments and under dissimilar conditions. For example, a child who has had the undivided attention of her parents for two years is disturbed by the arrival of a second child, who demands the parents' undivided attention. The second child will never have had the experience of enjoying a monopoly of the parents' love, and he will develop distinctive personality traits. His inherited endowment as a person is also unlike that of the first child, and the parents may have quite different expectations and plans for him.

As a result of inherited endowment and of his life experiences, each person becomes a distinctive, individual personality. Strong evidence suggests that the earliest years may be especially important in the molding of personality. Typical individual responses to persistent life problems and recurrent life situations may have their primary origin in early life. As people grow older, Van Gogh says, each becomes "the same apple, though riper."¹ No one is ever too old to learn, but a man will be recognizable as the same person nevertheless, in terms of his most primitive life adjustment patterns.

The Importance of Differences

What is the significance of individual differences? The eighteenth-century writer Edward Young once said

that each of us is born an individual, but dies a carbon copy. Perhaps he had in mind the human tendency to dress alike, eat alike, and, at times, even think alike. To be sure, if society is to thrive or even survive, certain conformities are demanded of each of us, but when outside pressures for conformity become too great, individual differences are ironed out of life. Behind the Iron Curtain and in totalitarian regimes throughout history, the elimination of individuality has been the prime target of those in power. Of all attempts at regimentation, thought control has been the most persistent authoritarian effort. The conservation of individual differences is of utmost importance for the preservation of the democratic way of life. When our society puts individual behavior in a figurative strait jacket, our culture will be at an end.

There are times when individual differences may obstruct personal growth; this is true where there are conspicuous deviations from the group. The fat youngster is an example. He is not very well equipped for running and fighting, and at the age of ten he probably has learned to respond in good-humored fashion to the teasing and taunts of his neighborhood gang. This does not mean that he is enjoying the role which his physical make-up has compelled him to assume. He seems jolly enough, but he may actually be quite miserable because no one seems to take him seriously. There are many sharp distinctions in physical appearance, speech, dress, and deportment that can make life adjustment a frustrating, unhappy series of experiences for those concerned.

Sometimes inconspicuous individual variations may be even more hazardous than the discernible differences. Many of those who flock into guidance clinics and occupy beds in mental hospitals have been "model" pupils or exemplary citizens. Young people who never cause any trouble and who always conform may be building up to serious problems. Could the lack of individuality be the most hazardous of all individual differences?

In the make-up of personality, balance is important—a balance of dreams and of action. Those who have no dreams or phantasies have a dull, commonplace existence. Growth depends on dreams which are nurtured into action and into reality. The healthy youth eventually tries to make his dreams come true, though his original dream will change as he grows physically and mentally. Mere dreamers may become drifters or human derelicts.

These points should be kept in mind by the leader as he studies the young people in his group: individual differences are inescapable; those distinctive characteristics of longest standing are the most difficult to change; parents and community can make demands so difficult to satisfy that the further personality development of young people may suffer; from the standpoint of mental hygiene, extreme conformity and extreme deviation may be equally hazardous.

As you, the leader, look over your group of young people, what individual characteristics seem to have the greatest impact upon personal development? Under what circumstances do the bookworm and the athlete

manifest individual differences that contribute constructively to personal growth? When do these differences have a negative effect upon their further growth in personality? Consider the girl who is expending time and mental anguish deciding on a new hair style. Under what circumstances do you feel that her preoccupation might indicate wholesome growth? What factors point to unhealthy developments? From surface signs, what deductions may be safely made concerning her underlying personality structure?

Seven Steps in Appraising Personality

Personality is invisible; we can only observe *expressions of personality*. From observation, the astute leader can arrive at tentative conclusions concerning the functioning of personality. Personality function can be judged on the basis of two criteria—relative efficiency and relative integration. Personal efficiency has to do with output, with productivity, and it is concerned with how much the individual is able to accomplish in any given field of endeavor. Personal integration has to do with unity and cohesiveness. A young person who is trying to ride off in as many directions as possible can hardly be spoken of as well integrated. Indecisive individuals who cannot choose between opposing goals or conflicting ways of life lack integration. From estimates of relative efficiency and integration it is possible for the leader to obtain clues as to whether a given individual is growing in his zest for life and in his personal adjustment. It is also possible to detect signs of stagnation and

to recognize instances where young people are caught in a frustrating cycle which gets them nowhere.

Any observations the leader can make about those in his group will aid him in his role as counselor. If he can find tentative answers to certain important questions, the leader will be on the way to understanding the young person who seeks his aid and will have a foundation on which to base his discussions:

1. *How does the individual look at life?* Is he the kind of person who, figuratively, always carries an umbrella? Rain or shine, does he always want to play it safe? Does he appear to cling tenaciously to the old and resist the new? Perhaps he views the world with fear and trembling, so that any unexpected development upsets him. Does he brood over past failures and imperfections, whether imaginary or real, or is he given to overoptimism? Does he gloss over his errors and blandly dismiss his problems with a diffident shrug of his shoulders? Perhaps he evades responsibility by blaming others for his dilemma. Sleep, comic books, and excessive verbalization on a superficial level are examples of other escape hatches frequently employed. It is also important to determine whether the individual's understanding of himself and of his world is fairly objective, or whether he has distorted his situation out of all proportion to reality. Is he a resourceful person? When others get into a tight spot, is he reassuring and calm? The answers to these and similar questions help the leader understand how the individual looks at life.

2. *How does the individual express himself?* As the leader listens to what the young person says to various

people under varying circumstances, what over-all patterns seem to emerge? Does he speed up or slow down when he talks about a subject in which he has much emotional investment? Does he raise his voice when under pressure, or does there appear to be an affectation in his speech? What emotional flavor is conveyed by his tone of voice? Is there a consistency in what he says, or does he flit from one topic to another? It is helpful to observe whether his remarks have depth or whether he is always engaged in small talk or seemingly purposeless or superficial patter. Does he express himself in clear and logical fashion, or go around in circles, or sprinkle his sentences with cryptic innuendoes? Does he stutter or lisp? If so, how is he affected by these speech disabilities?

From his remarks, what can the leader learn about this young person's views of himself and of others? What issues or events seem important to him? What may be learned from the way in which he walks across the room? What, if anything, does his mode of dress tell about the real person? Is his speech accompanied with mannerisms which suggest nervousness or inner tension? Is he basically sad, determined, devil-may-care, stoical, resigned, or wound up like an eight-day clock?

The leader, with his limited opportunities for observation, may not arrive at any definite conclusions—and a snap judgment can be fatal to his effectiveness as leader and counselor—but from the way the youth expresses himself, both verbally and nonverbally, the leader can fill in a few more lines in the total picture.

3. *How is the individual treated, or responded to,*

by others? Among members of his own age and sex is he usually in the middle of things, or is he often to be found on the side lines? Do others seem to listen when he speaks? Do they appear to behave any differently when he speaks? When he enters upon the scene? Do people joke with him, or laugh at him, or talk about idiosyncrasies behind his back?

In any group there are always those who contribute good ideas that are generally accepted, at least in principle, by the rest. Other members have interests and hobbies which are shared by many individuals in the group. What is the role of the individual who seeks counsel? Does he join readily in group activities, or does he insist that everything be done his own way? How do the other members react? How does he act when he is in a mixed-age gathering? How do adults react to him? How do children react?

What about the youth's reputation in the community? What adjective is most commonly employed when people talk about him? What might their general attitudes convey to him? Young people react to felt social approval or disapproval, and as a result their personality expressions become more inhibited or more free, more aggressive or more retiring—or perhaps they vacillate between these extremes.

4. *How does the individual meet new experiences?* When confronted by the novel or the unexpected, some young people freeze like a rabbit surprised by a spotlight. Others hop back and forth like runners caught between first and second base. Many quit at the first sign of failure. Is the youth like the timid bather, cautiously

sticking in a toe to check the temperature of the water? Or does he charge like a trumpeting elephant, disdainfully proclaiming by his actions how superior he imagines himself? How does he react to new people? How does he treat those who are not in *his* group?

What does he do when confronted by a new or uncertain situation? In the face of the untried, some young people betray their inner insecurity by showing off, by kibitzing, or by ridicule. Some respond by concentrating upon one segment or aspect of the situation and ignoring more prominent elements. Others appear poised, self-confident, and resourceful as they intelligently tackle unaccustomed problems. In each new situation a young person tends to revert to type, to behave according to his basic underlying personality patterns, unadorned by superficial adjustment devices.

5. *What is the individual's core personality?* The individual's core personality (a widely accepted psychological concept) is the basic and permanent pattern by which he responds to life situations. The core personality is the predominant means by which the individual has learned to preserve his self-identity. Under pressure, he necessarily responds according to patterns which have been most effective for him in the past—no matter how ineffectual his responses may appear to the objective observer. Within reasonable limits, the more external pressure is exerted, the more staunchly will the youth adhere to his fundamental patterns of adjustment. If he did not follow this course, he would no longer be the distinctive, functioning person that he is, for the very core of that personality would have been routed.

Are the youth's actions under pressure impulsive and apparently ill considered? Does he seem victimized by some fierce internal civil strife? Does he seem to be able to use all his resources? Or does he thresh about first with one poor tool and then with another? Does he draw into his shell or does he rapidly increase his communications with others? Can the leader determine whether the youth is overjoyed or overwhelmed or somewhere in between, and whether he is capable of meeting the challenges of life in a mature and masterful fashion?

6. *Does the individual feel a need to change as a person?* In the youth's view, is change either desirable or necessary? Some young people appear blind to their own shortcomings. Others attempt to cover up inner feelings of inferiority, often through superficial poses of superiority. Still other young people, of phlegmatic temperament, pretend to be neutral concerning their own personal welfare. Occasionally, a young person will be so ill or so weary in body, mind, or spirit that the possibilities for constructive change seem remote, or a youth may feel that he is a helpless pawn, at the mercy of forces beyond his control.

If a young person is either smug and self-satisfied or terrified, it is unlikely that he will be inclined to make any constructive change in his personality, and he may actually be unable to take such a step. Until he feels a need for change, his further personality growth is stultified, and no basic adjustment should be anticipated.

7. *How mature is the individual as a person?* Individual personality development is dependent upon the

dynamic interrelationships of the factors or aspects discussed thus far. In summing up his appraisal of the young person's personality development, the leader should ask himself whether the youth is relatively stable and, at the same time, flexible and adaptable. Are his viewpoint and perspective characterized by affirmative, positive realism? Is he able to accept reasonable limitations and demands and willing to forego immediate goals in favor of far-reaching and long-term objectives? Does he demonstrate sensitivity to the needs of others and is he able to share in co-operative enterprises? His initiative, integration, and integrity are additional evidences of maturity. His reaction to personal crises, to success, to failure, provide further evidence, as does his capacity for objective, productive, creative, and reflective thinking.

Such questions are much easier raised than answered. No leader can possibly make all these observations about a young person who seeks his help, no leader has enough time or sufficient contact with the youth. *But*, such questions can sharpen the leader's powers of observation and improve his ability to make objective observations and evaluations, as a basis for developing tentative goals when counseling with individual young people.

For purposes of illustration, consider the case of any young person whom you know well. For each of the questions repeated below, underscore those words which appear to describe him best. Feel free to add other terms which provide more apt descriptions.

How does he seem to look at life? Wistful, fearful,

belligerent, confident, self-conscious, cautious, analytical, sanguine, pessimistic, stubborn, ambivalent, care-free, as a spectator?

How does he express himself? Articulate, coherent, timid, negativistic, assertive, tense, anxious, relaxed, consistent, contradictory, befuddled, resigned, excited, passive, rambling, incoherent, spasmodic, circuitous, surreptitious, accusing, compliant, pitying, lying, exaggerating?

How is he treated, or responded to, by others? Indulgently, approved, ignored, welcomed, scorned, sought after, avoided, imitated, ridiculed, pitied, prodded, teased, rejected, admired?

How does he meet new experiences? Awkward, suspicious, adventurous, timid, bluffing, evading, objective, anxious, good-humored, plodding, quits easily, experimental, discouraged, critical, stoical, exuberant?

Now that you have listed in descriptive terms those words which seem best to apply to this specific young person, ask yourself these questions: On what basis have I made these value judgments? What factual evidence is at hand? At what points does the evidence appear to be contradictory or lacking? What else would I need to know in order to attempt to answer these questions more definitively? May my own perspective have distorted the facts?

On the basis of such questions, it will then be in order to attempt once more our tentative answers to each of the four questions as they apply to this young person. Only then is one ready to put these four areas together and inquire, in an exploring, open-minded

fashion, *What may be inferred about his core personality?* In venturing any response to this question, we shall also need to bear in mind the needs of youth cited earlier in Chapter 2. It is around common developmental tasks that most young people tend to reveal areas of primary inner conflict. Such data, combined with our revised, if tentative, answers to the four earlier questions, enable us to develop some hunches as to the more fundamental aspects of personality structure.

Thus, for Tony the basic problem may be an inability to be comfortable with members of the opposite sex. This may in turn be caused by resentment of his mother's insidious domination, or because he secretly feels his father should be a more successful person. Many other factors may be responsible, including the way Tony feels about his clothes, his physical appearance, and the social position of his family in the community. How does Tony typically attempt to deal with this situation? Is he fundamentally avoiding the problem, or does he just stew about it? Does he tend to blame others for his dilemma? Does he lunge forth irrationally, or very timidly try to have some successful experiences with girls? From his responses to this and other problems, a picture of the real Tony begins to emerge. If our understanding of Tony is based upon insightful observation over a period of time, we can begin to develop some ideas about his core personality —his most basic ways of adjusting to difficult life situations.

In such a careful, step-by-step fashion, our hypotheses are then capable of being tested by further observations.

Here it is necessary to lean over backwards lest one's own bias prejudice or obscure evidence which might force the modification of our first notions about Tony's core personality.

Finally, one is able to answer more certainly the questions, *How mature is he? How ready is he for basic changes in his life adjustment?*

This is the very crux of the matter, at all levels of counseling. In counseling one begins with the individual young person, rather than with any preconceived goals or objectives of one's own. The leader may see, for example, a partial or complete reformation of Tony's behavior and personality patterns, when such a development would be highly unrealistic, especially as a goal for the lay counselor.

Similarly, it is natural that the leader should unconsciously introduce his own feelings into the situation. He or she may have had little difficulty in associations with the opposite sex, and thus view the problem as very simple indeed. For Tony, the situation may be quite different. It may even be unrealistic to expect that Tony will make any perceptible progress at this stage of his life. In such an instance, both the goals for counseling and the goals for Tony will be greatly altered.

Although it will not be possible in every case to make such an exhaustive analysis as has been suggested in this chapter, to the extent that this can be accomplished, the counselor is almost certain to be a more competent, responsive, and understanding worker with youth.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Counseling Process

FOR THE VOLUNTEER working with youth groups, there is no formal boundary line between the functions of the group leader and those of the individual counselor. One phase of work often flows naturally into the other. Often it is in the group setting that the foundations are laid for effective individual counseling.

It would be well, therefore, to keep some kind of running record concerning each individual in the group. This will give a more accurate picture of the group members than would be possible if the leader depended upon memory alone. Systematic record-keeping also gives consistency to the type of observations made.

The agency supervisor will have many valuable suggestions, and he will probably need a regular report of plans and activities and certain statistical information about the group. The amount of time that the leader

can spend on paper work is limited, so for those who feel the need of a relatively easy system of maintaining a log or diary, a plan is suggested.

The only equipment required is a loose-leaf notebook, with a page devoted to each group member. After the individual names have been written at the top of their respective sheets, the dates of observational entries can be inserted in the left-hand margin at the proper time. The use of a simple code will greatly reduce the amount of writing necessary. A leader may prefer to work out his own system, but here is one possibility for categorizing and coding observations:

** Seemed primarily responsible for the group's moving from point A to point B. (Made a suggestion which was accepted, at least in principle, by the group; or initiated a course of action, and the majority of the other group members followed suit.)*

*O Tried unsuccessfully to move the group from point A to point B. (Same individual tactics as for * above, except the majority of the group rejected his proposals.)*

X Would not go along with what others wanted to do. (Individual sulked, became angry, kibitzed, appeared bored, or refused to accept responsibility.)

S Any special item concerning an individual which it seems important to record.

A Individual absent at this particular meeting.

In addition to the usual notation of absences, there are only four symbols to remember. With a little practice, classification should be a relatively simple matter. In some instances the leader will find it possible to record his observations right on the spot. If it is possible

to have at least one additional observer, the record will be more accurate. When a written record cannot be made at the time, entries should be made as soon as possible thereafter. Even the lapse of a few hours sometimes leaves a blurred impression concerning what happened at a meeting.

With the use of such a set of symbols, it is also advisable to make an additional brief entry which will justify the use of a particular symbol. For example:

Eleanor

O Invited group to her father's lodge for their wiener roast; they decided to go to Tupper Lake instead.

*** Suggested a talent show next month; group enthusiastic; Eleanor elected chairman of committee.

S Madge, our budding actress, seemed unhappy because she didn't get the job as chairman.

Frank

OX Argued for no outside dates on wiener roast; girls booed him down. Then Frank said he wouldn't attend.

S Are Frank and Lois about to break up? She seemed pleased at the outcome of the vote.

This kind of record helps the leader to understand an individual, and the benefits far outweigh the effort involved.

The Purpose of Counseling

In counseling, two people get together with a specific purpose in view. In the counseling situation, unlike chats between good friends, on an equal basis, it is as-

sumed that the leader is in a superior position. Often-times this proves to be a wrong assumption, but by his greater experience, maturity, objectivity, and practical ability to help the young person who comes to him, the leader is the superior. The leader has but one aim—to use his resources and skills, and all other available resources, so that they will be of greatest benefit to the young person.

Another distinctive characteristic of counseling is that two people get together to talk about things that really matter. The leader may discuss with the youth the current issues in world affairs, or the high cost of living, or the party at the Smithwicks'. But these and other topics are only discussed when they are important to the youth, or to the leader as he seeks to know the youth. The conversation may go in circles because the young person is traveling in circles in his thoughts and feelings. The significant thing is that the youth, in his own way, is getting at his problems and needs and is demonstrating his subjective ideas and feelings about his life situation.

In the counseling setting, the youth is also exploring various facets of his present predicament and reorganizing his ideas and feelings to a certain extent. The very process of talking out what is on his mind, even in limited degree, may enable him to see things in a new light. He may, perhaps unconsciously, begin a process of personal reflection and discover new relationships and patterns in the area under discussion. Thus, the counseling process aims at appraisal, exploration and evaluation, and reappraisal by the youth.

Whether the counseling process lasts fifteen minutes or fifteen weeks, the relationship is a temporary one. Whatever the outcome, or the function of the counseling experience, the lay counselor will not be involved in a situation that goes on and on and on. Even if the youth returns at varying intervals (or the leader sees him meanwhile in the group or in some other setting), the counselor's relationship with him is still temporary.

The ultimate aim of counseling is the development of objectives and of a plan for action whereby the youth can carry on under his own initiative. As much as some leaders like to be big brothers and sisters or (mistakenly) foster parents to young people in their groups, each young person must learn to stand on his own two feet. If the counseling experience has been helpful, the youth will not only be better equipped for the journey ahead but will have a greater understanding as to where he is going and why.

To be sure, the conscientious leader will want to make himself available should further help be needed. A systematic follow-up of these young people gives the leader a rough evaluation of his counseling efforts.

Becoming Acquainted

Perhaps this is the point at which to turn from the leader in general to *you*, as a leader and counselor. Unless you and the young boy or girl can become well acquainted, none of the essential characteristics of the counseling process is likely to exist. It is for this reason that the roles and the record-keeping of the competent

group leader were stressed previously. The counseling process has already begun when the boy or girl first approaches you about his problem. When you know in advance that a counseling session will take place, a review of your observations and other available data concerning the young person involved prepares you for the interview.

It may be that the young girl with whom you counsel this time is a comparative stranger. Someone you both know has suggested that she make the contact, and the fact that the suggestion is acted upon is an indication that the young person is favorably disposed toward you.

The young lady comes to see you, and there is an exchange of small talk. You should not appear too eager or too forward. Make her comfortable and let her lead off in the conversation. By means of this superficial technique you and the girl are making an effort to become acquainted.

In this process of becoming acquainted, the girl will also be testing you in various ways. She may, for example, ask whether her friend talked to you about such-and-such a problem. Probably she knows full well that this friend came to see you, and she is really trying to find out how confidentially her own problem is likely to be treated. Or she may sound you out about a general area, such as parent-child relations, to discover whether you are understanding. She may even do a bit of role-playing and exclaim, "I think kids are awful who . . .!"

Perhaps she is stiff and on guard, or she may become self-conscious after she has spoken her little rehearsed

speech. She may be all wound up, or she may sit there like a sleepy tabby-cat. She may fiddle with her nails or play with her keys. She may rush into the next act of the drama, or she may pause and you will both sit in silence. Whether she moves into some area of safe and calm discussion or launches out into choppy, uncharted waters, she is still trying to get acquainted with her leader and counselor. Even if you have known the girl for years, this process may take place.

The Youth Presents the Problem

When the young person finally states the purpose of the visit, she may blurt out the real purpose and discharge pent-up emotions, she may conceal its importance by assuming indifference and nonchalance, or she may offer driblets of information and prevent you from putting your finger on the real issue.

To some extent, many young people have learned to be hypocrites. Often they substitute for the real reason for their visit one that will appeal to an adult viewpoint and will place them in the most favorable light. Frequently, they cannot even admit to themselves the nature of their problem, much less talk about it to an adult.

However, if a reasonably good relationship has been established, discussion of the presenting or sham problem may lead into a gradual unfolding of the actual reason for the young person's visit. The superficial, random comments fit together, although it may take a re-

view after the interview is over to realize that the individual has been coming ever closer to the real problem.

Sometimes young people may sneak into conversation one small segment of the real issue. A boy may be visibly agitated because of the threat of a midterm examination. However, this problem in itself is related to many others which have to do with his whole personality development. At this point, all you know is that the youth says his situation is painful to him. You are not sure just why it is painful or how painful it really is. You are dealing with symptoms only, when the basic cause of distress may be something altogether different and much deeper.

No matter how complicated, confused, or peripheral the youth's comments may be, you will know when he touches on the real problem. When he begins to talk about difficulty in personal relationships, the problem is real. If he expresses the feeling or behaves as if he were on a treadmill or on a merry-go-round where he can never get the brass ring, or acts like a trapped animal in a cage, you know that the situation is crucial. If he says he is at the crossroads, where he must choose one road or another, you can be fairly sure what alternatives seem real to him. When any of these developments emerge, the counseling situation is at a crossroads too. If further progress is to be made and the deeper issues explored, co-operative effort will be required on the part of both the counselor and the young person who comes for help.

The more serious the personal disturbance, the more courage it takes to seek help. This is especially true of

young people, for whom such a move often signifies personal failure. Even if a young person finds two or three scapegoats to blame for his dilemma, he is still defensive underneath. He approaches counseling with mixed feelings. Part of him has an urge to stay and talk it through, while another part of him wants to run away from the situation. When this is not the case, the youth may have dependency needs which are of such long-term and deep-seated nature that he is not a suitable subject for lay counseling.

In the progress of a typical interview, the youth will be confronted with many questions. Two initial questions are: "How much should I tell this person?" and "What will he think of me if I do?" If, as a result of previous contacts and of your attitude during this interview, he feels that you have a high regard for him, the decision is sometimes all the tougher for him to make.

When a young person finds it possible to venture beyond these barriers, even in one small part of his problem area, he gambles that something constructive will emerge. However, he may still have reservations. When he says to himself, "Oh well, I'll give it a whirl!" he is not necessarily committed to a full partnership in the counseling enterprise.

Even if he does enter wholeheartedly into the venture, in nine cases out of ten he is thinking of you as a good genie who can set all to rights. He is not at all sure what he expects you to do or how you will accomplish it. If he does have some ideas on this subject, they are usually highly unrealistic if not downright fantastic.

You can understand him better if you accept two

facts: (1) No one really wants to make fundamental changes in his personality; he would rather see the world change, conditions change, or other people change. (2) Each individual is reluctant to assume responsibility for his own actions, and, particularly in the case of many adolescents, there tends to be at one and the same time a long, loud howl for privileges and a consistent dodging of responsibility.

Despite conflict and resistance on the part of the youth, the leader tries to establish a working relationship which guards against overdependency and encourages the youth to move ahead. Even if the leader is unskilled in counseling and the young person is inclined to be negativistic or unco-operative, some things will be uncovered. Under more favorable conditions, much more vital material will be released.

If a sufficiently good interpersonal relationship has been established, an emotional catharsis may take place in the young person involved. He may feel inwardly cleansed because he has poured out his uncertainties, conflicts, or guilt feelings. Temporarily, he may feel as though a staggering load has been taken off his shoulders. He may become more relaxed physically. Occasionally, during such periods of temporary relaxation, a young person may have a sudden burst of insight concerning the deeper issues of his problem. When this happens, he may bottle up again, while his tensions become even higher than before. The leader may find that most young people develop emotional blocks in the counseling situation. Some of these may be only temporary and break up when the relation to the leader

becomes more secure. Other blockings are more stubborn and may call for referral to a skilled therapist.

This shuttling between advance and retreat is characteristic of nearly all effective counseling. Through this process, if the counseling relationship remains strong, the leader learns much about the young person. As he attempts to analyze the sore spots which cause retreat, and the sunny areas which encourage him to go ahead, the leader begins to understand the youth and to see his problems through his eyes.

If the counseling experience has been fairly successful, the youth's distress is eliminated, or at least alleviated. He begins to view himself and his problem in somewhat broader perspective. For him, the universe no longer seems to wobble uncertainly around one pivotal, perplexing problem. Timidly, he begins to take the first tentative steps toward improved personal integration and more effective problem-solving activity. Even if his next step is only the firm resolution to come back for another counseling session, that is real progress.

The Leader's Role in Counseling

The leader's most important job is to encourage free expression on the part of the youth. With such encouragement, the young person is much more likely to communicate his feelings, his deeper perplexities, and his underlying attitudes toward them. The leader can also help the youth to identify his problem, weigh proposed solutions, and, on occasion, can refer him to possible re-

sources for information or other assistance. If his role as counselor is to be discharged successfully, the leader must assume certain responsibilities.

The leader's first task is to give his undivided attention during the interview. Preoccupation with other affairs can be fatal to the whole process. The youth will interpret such behavior as indifference; and to him, indifference is synonymous with personal rejection. If the counselor's mind wanders only for a moment, he may in just that moment miss the most important development of the whole session.

It is important that the leader does not allow his personal problems to affect the youth, that he avoid distracting eccentricities and mannerisms, and that he avoid reactions of shock or excitement. He also should refrain from interrupting with anecdotes about his (the leader's) similar problems; and avoid patronizing or talking down. The leader should leave himself out of the picture and try to put together all the bits of information he gets from the youth. He should pay attention to the youth's words, his manner of speech, facial expressions, and bodily movements.

Finally, the leader needs to remember that he cannot play at being God. He has neither the ability nor the right to sit in judgment and weigh a young person's past conduct or future fate by arbitrary standards. Although he may at times help him determine direction, the leader cannot dictate to any young person what his future course of action should be. The leader, because of his fundamental faith in the divine element in every human being, can neither wholly condemn him nor

deny him the privilege of making his own decisions. Because of his belief in the youth as a child of God, the leader will also have confidence that the ability for self-transformation is inherent from birth. The youth must, in the final analysis, help himself. The leader can help him to gain insight into his problem on the basis of which he can make sound choices.

There is one problem area which is virtually inescapable. To professional and to lay counselors alike, transference carries with it many potential dangers.

Whatever the leader's institutional connection, vocation, age, sex, or economic position, he can be sure that to the young person who comes to him with a problem he represents a potential source of help. Thus, he is seen as having a lot in common with other people from whom this young person has sought help through the years. That the youth may not feel that he has always had proper help from these sources only compounds the issue. For example, for one young person the leader may unconsciously represent a father, a mother, perhaps a grandparent. To another young person, this same leader may seem like an older brother or sister, or some adult friend or boon companion with whom he has shared his hopes and aspirations. Because of the leader's relation to a group of young people affiliated with a social, religious, or other youth-serving agency, he will undoubtedly be identified with authority in some form or another.

Thus, quite unconsciously in most instances, the youth transfers to the leader the feelings he has toward the person or persons with whom the leader is associ-

ated in his inmost mental and emotional processes. If he is a father or mother substitute, for example, and that parental relationship has been a strained one, the leader can expect the young person to manifest the same conflicting feelings toward him, his counselor. In such a situation, he can expect even more emphatic or more explosive expressions of hostility or rejection than would be displayed toward the youth's own parents. When a young person feels that he has been unjustly treated by someone in a position of authority, he tends to anticipate that the leader too will treat him unjustly.

This is a negative transference, but positive attitudes will be transferred also. The youth may find in the leader a kind of receptivity, a genuine interest and concern, for which he has always sought but which he has never been able to recognize or to accept. In the counseling relationship, as a result of this positive transference, many a young person finds himself for the first time accepted for what he is and may become, despite what he says or does. As the youth becomes aware of this acceptance and of the counselor's belief in him and in his potential as a person, the transference can consummate in an attitude of faith in, or dependence upon, the counselor.

Before this point, the leader must decide to what extent, if at all, it is wise for the dependency relationship to develop. If he has neither the time nor the inclination to assume the accompanying responsibilities, he may have to appear more impersonal than his feelings would bid him behave. If the youth is sturdy enough to walk alone, the leader would be doing actual

harm were he to offer the crutch of a dependent relationship. If the leader finds that for him the youth's dependence is one of the most satisfying aspects of the counseling experience, he would not be helping the young person by encouraging such a development. He would only be indulging his own ego.

The greater the personal crisis and the greater the inability of the youth to deal with it, the greater his dependency needs will be. He may need to transfer his burdens to stronger shoulders until he can find the strength to deal with them himself. In such an eventuality, the leader must work toward helping this young person understand that while he may find help through sharing, in the final analysis only the individual can solve his own problems. The leader must try to wean the youth from a dependency relationship. This process may be a lengthy one, but the leader will be alert for the first sound opportunity to throw some responsibility back on the shoulders of the youth. He might find it helpful to emphasize that he has confidence in the youth and knows he can take responsibility. Some young people, before they achieve emotional independence, will be extremely jealous of any attention the leader pays to others in the group. When the leader and the youth are members of the opposite sex, romantic fantasies are not uncommon, and the young person may feel guilty because of these amorous sentiments.

As the process of transference gradually reverses itself, the youth may display mixed feelings toward the leader. His very ability to do so is probably evidence of his increased capacity for independence. Occasionally,

he may even say that the leader did him more harm than good or helped him not at all. The true state of affairs may be exactly that. It may be just as true that the leader has helped more than either one realizes. Under ordinary conditions, when all has gone well, the youth will gradually resume the relationship he had with his leader before the counseling. Whatever happens, the leader should not fret because the youth appears ungrateful. The very absence of praise may be a sign that the leader has done his job well.

The Leader's Limitations in His Role as Counselor

No matter what his skill and personal competence may be, every leader has limitations as a counselor.

1. *He is limited in time.* The lay counselor is rarely able to help all his young people to the extent that he might wish. Since he has responsibilities to the young people with whom he meets week after week, he cannot invest time and energy in any one member of the group to the detriment of the group. A volunteer leader earns his living in some other field; he has obligations to himself, family, and friends, and he cannot afford to neglect any of these important areas. Time is a very real limitation for almost all leaders.

2. *He is limited because of his own experiences.* Although he can try to sense what it means to be a young person in a troubled age, he cannot turn back the clock and find out firsthand. As his own life has progressed, he has traveled along a narrowing road, since his every major personal decision has limited the opportunities

which followed. Even if the leader does not feel circumscribed, to adventurous youth he may appear to be in a rut.

3. He is limited by his training and experience as a counselor. The counselor who succeeds with everyone he tries to help has yet to make his appearance, and the average lay leader makes many mistakes. Even though he tries to profit from his errors and avoid repeating the same ones, there are always areas in which he is grossly incompetent. It is a good thing that young people are so resilient and make progress even though the leader fails to make the most of some of his counseling opportunities.

4. He is limited by his own personality patterns. The leader's personal ways of adjusting to life situations develop blind spots in his perception of the youth and his problems. The leader may behave irrationally when the counseling content falls into areas in which he is insecure. Because of his own personality, the leader reacts unfavorably to some young people; they rub him the wrong way. Because of what he is as a person, his biases, uncertainties, and feeling tones communicate themselves to those with whom he counsels.

What can the leader do about his personal limitations? In the first place, he can be aware, in so far as possible, of his own biases, limitations, and tendencies to go off the deep end when particular issues are at stake. He can admit frankly that there are a great many things he does not know. He can recognize early that a particular case may be beyond his capacity and refer the young person to more competent people or agencies.

Only when the leader admits his limitations can he do a good counseling job. If he "knows everything," he will find it difficult to become a confidant of the youth, he will not listen carefully to the problem, he will not help the young person to stand alone.

The Leader and the Interview

ONCE THE YOUNG PERSON has persuaded himself to seek the help of his leader and once the leader has accepted both his opportunity and his limitations in the role of counselor, interviews can proceed on a sound and helpful basis.

If you are a group leader, you will realize that the counseling interview actually begins with your introduction to each young person in your group. As time passes you establish a relationship of mutual trust and confidence with individual members. This kind of personal association is essential if young people are to enter a counseling relationship with you.

Preparation for the Interview

The conscientious leader builds up a personal record for each member of his group, on the basis of his cumu-
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lative observations from week to week. Thus, when the leader is faced with a personal interview, he can review his records concerning that particular person. Such a procedure serves as a refresher for the busy leader and stimulates the recall of situations and events which can contribute toward a better understanding of the young person when he comes for counseling. A wise leader reviews his records frequently so that he is prepared for the spontaneous interviews which may take place anywhere at any time. Not all young people arrange for formal appointments.

If an appointment is made in advance, it is important that the leader evince some understanding of the nature of the problem, if it has been disclosed. A young man may seek out the leader and say that he wants to talk about a misunderstanding which has developed at school. When would a conference be possible? The young man arrives at the designated hour. If his counselor greets him with, "Let's see, now, what was it you wanted to talk to me about?" it is quite conceivable that the young man will feel his counselor has not taken his request seriously, and the session will be off to a very poor start indeed. The interview holds much greater promise when the leader shows that he remembers the previous conversation.

In some instances it is well to give thought to the problem to be presented before the counseling interview takes place. A young woman may indicate that she would like to discuss ways and means by which she may become an architect. Every group leader cannot be expected to know about schools offering courses in this

field, the entrance requirements, or the opportunities for women in this profession. The group leader does not need to acquire all this information in preparation for the interview, but he will find it advantageous to know where such information can be obtained. Otherwise, only limited objectives may be achieved when the young girl discusses her problem.

No leader should make pre-judgments which will bias the direction which the counseling interview takes. He might present the facts and encourage consideration of both sides of the problem. The final judgments and decisions can be made only by the young person who seeks his help.

Whenever possible, pre-planning should allow an unhurried, uninterrupted period for the interview. Many counseling interviews will be of the spontaneous, on-the-spot type. However, when the problem seems to be extended, complex, or intimate in nature, the group leader may suggest a follow-up interview in the immediate future in order to explore the matter more fully. When this procedure is followed, it is extremely important that the interview be held under the most favorable conditions, with privacy and freedom from interruption and outside pressures.

There are occasions when the leader must arbitrarily limit the time he can spend on an interview. When this is true, he should say so in advance. For one young person a time limit is an impetus that makes him focus on the main problem. For another, a time limit immediately conditions the response and adds tenseness. It is best if the leader can act as if he has all the time in the

world to devote to the youth and can give the impression that nothing is so important as the young person's peace of mind.

Not every problem that is brought to the leader—in fact, only the very minor ones—can be handled in one interview. The leader ought to make sure he can devote *enough* time to the youth before he sees him for the first interview.

What the Leader Can Do in the Interview

No two counseling interviews are exactly alike. The interviews vary because each person is different and views life in his own way. Even the person who comes to the leader for counseling is not the same today as he was yesterday.

In counseling with young people the leader deals with the ebb and flow of individual aspirations and frustrations as each young person encounters them in his private world of flux and change. Personal problems, concerns, needs, and feelings provide the unique content of the interview. However, no matter which direction the interview may take, and regardless of the territory covered, every leader uses one or more approaches to the youth and his concerns. The most important job of the leader is to *listen* to the young person. Everything else the leader does is based on listening.

1. *The leader helps each young person find the answers for himself.* Every human being has to work out his own salvation and make his own decisions, based on information obtained, insight gained, explorations

made, and resolutions taken. Pat answers and glib assurances are not satisfactory to young people. They want to learn, and the counseling situation is for them a learning situation. The leader can help young people to make decisions which will not be harmful to others or to society as a whole, but invariably young people will come up with personal solutions which are the best for them at that particular juncture in their experience. In fact, any other conclusion would not be real. Because of his inherited endowments and his accumulated experience, each young person perceives his situation in a particular way, and one solution will have more appeal than another. To help each young person find the answers for himself is the end goal of all counseling.

2. *The leader increases each young person's feeling of being understood and accepted.* In times of great personal crisis, each one tends to feel that he stands alone. For many a perplexed young person there does not seem to be any way out of his dilemma. His personal resources seem too skimpy and unreliable. In varying degrees of desperation, the youth senses darkness and uncertainty, increased by his waning strength and mounting tensions.

Every young person with whom a leader counsels has known these feelings in some measure. As he fights the undertow of indecision, he seeks one thing above all others—understanding from others. Safety and security may seem to be his goals, but he yearns primarily to be understood as a person. He wants his leader to know that he finds the going tough and that he cannot see beyond his hand. He also wants him to know that on

other occasions he has managed to emerge from crisis triumphantly. He wants to share his goals with the leader; he does not want pity or condescension.

Along with understanding, he seeks acceptance. Of the two, acceptance is a great deal more difficult to attain and to give. Acceptance involves the real person beneath the outward mannerisms, the physical characteristics. In all effective counseling the leader accepts the youth because he has faith in him as a person, because he recognizes to what heights of richness and integrity the youth may rise.

3. *The leader looks and listens.* Every interview, beginning with the first, is replete with clues by which the leader may understand the young person better. Non-verbal clues, however important they may be, are often ambiguous and therefore may be especially misleading to the inexperienced counselor. The leader can watch unobtrusively and observe what this youth does with his body in the course of the interview. Some hypotheses might be assumed as to the significance of typical gestures. In the course of the counseling sessions, the meaning of repeated gestures and facial expressions often becomes increasingly plain, affording valuable clues to what is going on in the counseling process.

The counselor listens. He listens not only to what is said, but to how it is said. He tries to determine what is *not* said. He disciplines himself so that he does not interrupt just at the time when listening might be most profitable. He denies himself the luxury of wandering attention. He concentrates on what the young person is

saying, rather than planning what he will say at the next pause in the conversation.

4. *The leader is objective and nonjudgmental.* If counseling is to be most effective, at least one of the partners in the enterprise must be as objective as possible in his comprehension of the total situation. In the initial stages, this responsibility falls on the leader.

He gives particular notice to what the young person selects to discuss, and he watches for elements of distortion. For instance, a very lovely girl may say that she is unlovely, ungracious, unattractive. When reality appears to be so distorted or the young person's perspective has become warped, the leader may learn much about both the source and the relative intensity of the young person's problem and about possible contributing factors.

Through an objective approach the leader can also deduce what the youth thinks of himself as a person and whether his self-opinion is accurate, inflated, or deprecatory. He can also get some idea of the dynamic operating forces at work in the youth's private universe. This young man may view everything with reference to its apparent effect upon him, without consideration for others. That young lady may be unable to see her problem except as it affects her mother.

The objective, nonjudgmental approach is imperative. When the leader makes such an approach, the youth is more likely to drop his defenses and pretenses and show himself as he really is.

5. *The leader reflects the feelings of the youth.* Any person might find difficulty in recognizing some of his

own most prominent personality characteristics, even if he encountered them in broad daylight! It is, therefore, easy to see that when the leader attempts to mirror the feelings of the youth, it is almost as though he were introducing the young person to himself. Except for highly disturbed youngsters, who need more direction and support, most young people respond favorably to this approach. Many professional counselors make almost exclusive use of this nondirective type of guidance.

The ability to reflect the feelings of the young person with whom he counsels is one of the leader's most difficult tasks. A skill that comes slowly at first, it often improves with practice. For some leaders, it will represent a totally new approach, a rich resource, and one of the chief methods of channeling the counseling experience.

Just how does the leader reflect the feeling of the young person being counseled? In the first place, reflecting feeling is quite different from merely reflecting the content of the youth's remarks. Anyone can parrot words and imitate the manner in which they were said. Real understanding, alertness, and sensitivity are required to mirror feelings accurately. One excited adolescent, for example, may exclaim, "We have a new baby at our house!" How does the leader respond? Would the statement, "You have a new baby at your house," be an appropriate remark? Perhaps. "So you have a new baby!" might be another way of saying it, but that might not reflect this young person's *feelings*. "And you're pretty happy!" might be a more accurate way of mirror-

ing how this adolescent feels about the event. Or, if the youth feels threatened or negativistic about the new arrival in his household, an altered response would be in order. The main thing is to attempt to reflect the feelings and emotions of the young person being counseled.

The previous discussion concerns those methods which are common to all counseling. There are other approaches which *may* be used. The fact that they are used effectively on occasion may commend them to some leaders for use in particular situations.

5. *The leader may help clarify conflicting thoughts and feelings.* If the young person's feelings are disturbed, the counselor can try to clear things up a bit. Thus, when the youth has mixed reactions to the advent of a new baby in the home or some other personal crisis, the leader might point out that he seems to feel both angry and glad. When the young person beats around the bush for half an hour, the leader might tactfully point out that he has not organized his thinking very well and therefore contributes to the confusion. Or the youth may not be so confused in his thinking as he appears—he may only find it hard to talk. The leader, by adroit questions and comments, may help bring the problem into the open.

6. *The leader may give information.* It often happens that the young person comes to the interview with a question that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." This is true of many questions on educational and occupational matters: "How many Carnegie units do I need to graduate from high school?" "Where may

I find out which schools offer training in electronics or television?" "Are there opportunities in home economics?" "What are the best ways to look for a job?" "Does the army give you courses which count for school credit?"

Or, a young person may be needlessly disturbed because his mother has a small spot on her left lung and must spend a few months in a tuberculosis sanatorium. The true facts of the situation can be presented so that the youth finds that the problem may not be nearly so grave as he may have supposed. Or he may be confused because he has "wet dreams," with accompanying guilt feelings. The knowledge that these experiences happen to most healthy adolescent males can help set his thinking aright. Whatever the occasion, the leader needs to know that he has the correct information himself or knows where it can be found, that the young person wants and needs the information, and that with such data in his possession the youth will be able to deal with his problem more constructively.

7. *The leader may ask questions.* When a patient complains of a particular pain or other disturbing symptom, the physician may ask how long this has been going on and whether there have been any changes in the symptoms. In similar fashion (without being a diagnostician!), the leader may ask questions, to get the background in more detail. Sometimes the youth relates his problem or describes his situation in such rapid-fire fashion that the leader is confused. In such instances he may say, "Now, let's get this straight. I'm not too clear

in my own mind whether you said this or whether you said that."

At other times, the leader may ask questions in order to raise issues. A young man discusses the fact that he is thinking strongly about changing his religious affiliation to another denomination because "all the kids I know go there." Here, the leader might raise the question as to why people choose a particular church or ask the youth if he knows what differences exist between the two churches. The particular question might vary, but the intent would be identical—to raise issues that cause reflection about decisions and their outcomes.

Some counselors find it useful to ask questions in order to ascertain what the youth has learned during his counseling or other experiences. Occasionally, a question may be employed to end the interview and, at the same time, subtly place the responsibility for future action on the young person himself.

The use of this particular approach will depend in large measure on the readiness of the youth to communicate. Considerable skill is required in framing the questions so that they will not be too disconcerting or overwhelming. When leading questions are asked, there is a serious possibility that the leader may be taking responsibility away from the youth. Here again, the degree of direction assumed by the leader is a matter of his training, experience, and personality pattern. No type of professional counseling makes exclusive use of a question-and-answer approach.

8. *The leader may suggest possible areas for further exploration.* This is the "you might . . ." or "have you

thought of . . ." approach. A girl comes to the leader with her problem: She wants to pass her English course, but she is getting nowhere in writing her required composition on commemorative stamps issued during the Roosevelt administration. She has the facts, but the facts leave her cold. She just cannot start writing her assignment, which is due next Tuesday. Her counselor might say, "Have you thought of talking with Mr. Brown over at the Vogue Shop? He's been collecting stamps for years and might be able to tell you some interesting things that would liven your report. And I'm certain he'd be glad to talk with you. Last year, he was of considerable help to another young person I know."

Whenever the youth seems to be at the end of his rope or appears to be launching forth half-armed or ill-informed, the leader may tactfully suggest additional avenues of exploration. At the same time, the competent counselor will make it clear to the young person that he may exercise his own discretion in the matter.

9. *The leader may suggest possible courses of action.* Of all available methods of counseling, this is probably the most directive. In the hands of the lay counselor, at least, it is probably the least effective approach. Paradoxically, it is the one used most often by inexperienced lay counselors. When employing this approach, the leader is offering a "prescription" to the young person. One difficulty lies in the fact that if the leader's advice is taken, the result is not always the anticipated one. The leader who gives suggestions that do not work out is not always trusted a second time. Another pitfall is the fact that the youth may decide against the recom-

mended course of action but, because he did not follow through, remain in a muddle and, at the same time, be blocked against continuing the counseling relationship. Finally, if the suggestion has good results the youth may increase his dependence upon the leader and, as a result, fail to assume more and more initiative and responsibility.

Under certain circumstances, the directive approach may be helpful. If a young man is completely bottled up and immobilized, unable to make any independent decisions, filled with mounting tensions, the experienced leader may suggest a course of action which the youth can carry out, and which at the same time involves no necessity for final decisions. The youth may feel himself a partner in the enterprise, some of his waning self-confidence may be restored, and the resulting productivity may be a real aid to future counseling with him.

The directive approach has its place in the total scheme of things, and in rare instances may be applied to advantage by the lay counselor. Used inadvisedly, the prescription of a specific course of action can be dangerous in the hands of an inexperienced lay counselor.

10. *The leader may obtain additional data concerning the young person.* It sometimes happens that a leader feels that he is working in the dark. He may want to know more about the young person's background or find out more about his problem. For the best results, two conditions should obtain: good rapport with the youth and satisfactory relationships with resource persons in the community who can help. (For example,

test results require interpretation by a trained professional person.) The leader should not contact other people until he has the young person's permission to do so and until he has cleared with him as to how much of what he has revealed may be discussed with a third person. Thus, in an ethical although not a legal sense, the leader acts as an agent when he seeks more information about the youth. The only excuse for doing so is in order to be more helpful as a counselor.

Although professional people will usually be appreciative of the lay counselor's efforts, he cannot expect them to be altogether free in what they will divulge. Cumulative school records, for instance, cannot normally be made available to those outside the ranks of the school's administrative and teaching staffs. The family physician is bound to keep in strictest confidence much information which has been shared with him. Social workers and other agency representatives must exercise similar discretion. However, if the leader has a good personal relationship with these professional people, he can usually enjoy the fullest co-operation that ethics will permit.

When the leader contacts laymen who are not so thoroughly imbued with the importance of ethical silence, he may find a different situation. Some unthinking people will be more than ready to tell everything they know. What they say should be taken with a grain of salt.

11. *The counselor may make a referral.* There are times when the lay counselor hates to turn over a young person and his problem to someone else. It seems like

an admission of failure. Nevertheless, the important thing is to turn the youth over to more competent hands before the failure point is actually reached. In this way, there is much less damage to all concerned. Although every lay counselor has to be a jack of all trades, he should know his limitations. When a youngster has a burning fever or complains of other physical ailments, he needs to see a doctor. When he manifests any of the conditions described as beyond the scope of the leader, a young person needs to see a psychiatrist or a professional psychologist. When his central problem is on the periphery or outside of the leader's personal training and experience, he ought to be encouraged to consult a specialist in that particular field. When the leader cannot possibly give the needed attention and help, he has an obligation to put the youth in contact with someone who can be of more assistance.

The process of referral often takes time and is not easily accomplished. The leader should do everything possible to help the youth make the transition and to make it of his own volition. He may show resistance to the idea; he may even refuse to go along with any referral, no matter how smoothly the transition is made. In such cases, the leader may continue to work with the youth for a while and move toward his gradual acceptance of the advantages to be obtained through contact with resources greater than the leader's. This is not always possible, however. Where the young person's personal welfare, or that of others, is seriously threatened, a referral may be necessary, despite his protests but with his full knowledge of the action. Such even-

tualities will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 9, which will also include a brief mention of referral procedure.

These, then, are the approaches most often used by the leader. Every one of these approaches may be used to advantage or to disadvantage, depending on the situation, on the leader, and on the youth. Whatever approach he uses, the leader cannot expect to achieve far-reaching and permanent results unless he develops a good relationship with the youth. Through these various approaches, the counselor comes to know and understand life better, and so understands more deeply the young person who comes to him for counseling.

The Leader Evaluates His Work as Counselor

IT WILL BE HELPFUL to consider in some detail the counseling done with one young person to show something of the importance of collecting as many facts as possible about the roles played by the leader and the youth, the progression of interviews, and the successive changes in the ideas and actions of the youth.

The notes on Pamela Preston are from a leader's records. The questions and discussion will help a leader to evaluate his own work as counselor. The main question on which all others hinge is: "Have I helped this young person in any way?"

Pamela Preston

Pamela is completing her junior year in high school. An only child, she has always been deeply attached to her parents. Pamela has been very active in young peo-

ple's groups and has demonstrated her enthusiasm and creative talents on many occasions. Although she has seemed tired lately, Pamela gives the impression of being a healthy young woman. Her group leader was not prepared for the events which began to unfold late in October. The information in the following excerpts from the leader's notebook came from various sources, including Pamela's parents and friends and her contacts in the group and in the community:

October 26. Pamela was quiet all through the meeting tonight. Her face seemed taut and drawn. Unusual for her, she was wearing no make-up, and her hair was stringy and somewhat unkempt. She fumbled with her purse and put her scarf on and off several times before she edged toward the door at the end of the meeting. I caught up with her and asked if I could drive her home. With everyone else already gone, she broke down and cried bitterly. Finally, she swabbed at her face and looked around like some caged animal. It was at least ten minutes before she could say a word. "My—my life is ruined!" Pamela stammered. Then she broke down again. Bit by bit, she eventually related how she had for a long time had her heart set on going to Halycon College, a first-rate institution with exceedingly high standards and rigid admission requirements. "This month . . . for the very first time . . . I missed the honor roll! Now I can't ever go to Halycon!" Further conversation revealed that Mrs. Frisbie, the principal, had called her in to discuss the fact that all her teachers reported Pamela was daydreaming a great deal of the time.

In this interview, too, I learned that Pamela had not been sleeping well for the past month or so. With re-

newed weeping, she also reported temper tantrums and "just feeling tired." "Nothing is any use any more—I'm just no good, I guess." Pamela revealed, moreover, in a voice that could barely be heard, that her menstrual cycle had gone all haywire too.

I recommended that she talk the whole thing over with her family physician, if she and her parents agreed that this might be a good thing to do.

October 29. I met Frances Griffith, a close chum of Pamela, on my way downtown. She mentioned Pamela, and we continued to talk about her. Frances reported that Pamela had been to the doctor. According to Frances's account (which I later verified over the phone with Pamela), the girl's family physician found nothing basically wrong physically. The child is run-down from lack of sleep and from irregular eating habits. He's giving her some sort of mild sedation, and also a prescription to build her up. Later, her mother told me that the doctor felt the whole thing might be due to some emotional upset not too unusual for adolescents.

November 7. I'm frankly worried. Pamela still has the same symptoms, although she says she sleeps better. Our interview tonight was almost a duplicate of the weeping and wild-eyed session we had last time. She did mention, though, that she and Oliver had quarreled, and that now he's dating someone else fairly regularly. Pamela seems to have a lot invested in that boy. She spent nearly ten minutes expressing her fears that he might be drafted soon. I thought I had helped her in this interview, but she left in a huff with this parting shout: "I hate everybody! I even hate myself!"

November 9. Pamela called me up a little after four o'clock. She complained of a splitting headache, and said

she just had to talk to somebody. I invited her to come over, but Pamela felt she wasn't up to the trip physically. After double-checking to be sure her mother had not returned from the grocery, Pamela told me with much feeling that her admissions application (really just an expression of interest, I felt) had arrived from Halycon. "This is the very last straw! I just can't go on! . . . And Mother and Daddy tell me that I'm letting them down with my lousy schoolwork!"

November 13. Three of the gang were over to wrap packages for overseas. From their conversation I learned that Pamela had been home ill with a bad cold and sore throat. Her father answered the phone when I called. Said it was nothing much, and Pamela had only a low-grade fever.

November 15. Frances called up, greatly agitated over Pamela. It seems that Pamela told Frances and two or three of the other girls that she was never coming down to our young people's group again. "You're nothing but a bunch of crumb-buns!" Pamela reportedly told her friends. Frances says they're all just about ready to mark Pamela off their lists. The gang feels that she's sore because Oliver jilted her for somebody else. I hope I succeeded in convincing Frances that Pamela really needs friends just now, even if she isn't behaving in a very nice way. Tried to make Frances feel some responsibility for helping the gang see what is the right thing to do in order to help Pam when she needs them most.

November 18. The girls must have taken to heart my suggestions about Pamela. Chris and Angela asked her to make posters for the carol sing, which always attracts kids from the whole community. Pamela has always done a wonderful job on such things too. But Pam adamantly

refused! Claimed she had no talent. Maintained that posters never did any good anyway. She also told Chris and Angela in no uncertain terms that the whole idea of carol singing was silly child's stuff. That made the girls pretty bitter. The crack that they must still write letters to Santa Claus was rather cutting, I think.

November 21. Now I believe in miracles. Pam stopped Chris and Angela in the hall to tell them she had a swell idea for the carol sing. Everybody could dress up like Dickens characters or as minstrels—or anyway make it a costume affair which would still be quite inexpensive and a lot of fun. But then I found out that Pamela nevertheless says that she wouldn't go on a bet. Guess miracles come in small doses after all.

November 23. Ran into Pam in the five and ten. She asked if she could walk by the courthouse with me. We sat down and watched the squirrels for a while. Pamela's all excited about her English lit. course—but flunked her biology quiz. She was vague about it, but there's also been some sort of blowup at home. Admits calling her mother a "silly old fool." Pam also volunteered the information that religion was for the birds. "Everybody's out for number one," according to Pamela. What are we going to do with the child?

November 26. Pamela surprised everybody by coming to the barn dance with that new boy, Dave Ferguson. I noticed Pam has a new permanent, too. Wondered whether that was Pam's idea, or her mother's. It would be just like Mrs. Preston to think of some kind of morale-builder. I didn't see Pamela give Oliver so much as a nod all evening.

November 27. Pamela called up before she left for school. Didn't sound like a cry-baby at all. Said she

hadn't slept a wink all night. Just stayed awake thinking things out for herself. 'You know what!' Pamela exclaimed excitedly, "first thing this morning, I apologized to Mother for all the bad things I said to her. And I'm going to try to see my biology instructor today and try to get back on the beam. You'll have to excuse me now, 'cause I want to help Mother make cookies for the Pilgrim Class's bake sale."

November 30. Pamela phoned and wanted to come over. I had to tell her I could see her for only fifteen minutes. When she came, Pam was really down in the dumps. Kept repeating that she'd tried her best to do right, but things just weren't any better. I tried to encourage her to let things work out gradually, but the suggestion didn't go over. When she left, Pamela said, "Oh well, nobody ever understands me anyway. Thanks for trying though!"

December 6. Pam came to the meeting tonight! Everybody acted as though she'd never been away, except for bringing her up to date on things. The group didn't seem to hold back in greeting her, and on the other hand didn't pour it on too thick. Pamela asked to see me for a minute afterward. It seems she has been reading up on various colleges in the school library. (They have a good vocational guidance setup there.) For once, Pamela didn't want to talk about herself, she said. Wanted me to find a way to get in touch with Jane Higgins, whom she ran into in the library. Pamela says Jane is "all messed up," and desperately wants me to help.

December 9. Pam really did it today! Pulled a temper tantrum in the school lunchroom when Jane Higgins, of all people, spilled her milk. Pam called me up, literally in tears over the episode. "What's the matter with me?

I always want to do one thing, and then I do just exactly the opposite!" However, when I tried to get Pam to see what she might do to rectify matters, she could see no course of action at all.

December 11. Learned Pam has been home sick again.

December 12. I took Pam a book I thought she might enjoy reading. We got into a long conversation in her room. Today she said, "No college for me! And I'm off men for life! I don't care what Mother and Daddy want me to do! Or anybody wants me to do! I've a good mind to be—to be—oh well, I'd be a failure anyway!" Before I left, though, Pam told me she was using her convalescence to bone up on her biology.

December 16. Frances told me Pam made 83 on her biology test.

December 18. Mrs. Preston called. Said Pam had made a scene at dinner over nothing. Now says she won't come caroling with us.

December 27. Pam did come after all. Did a good job of helping Jane feel at home with the crowd. Wonder what the new year will bring!

Eight Steps in Evaluating Counseling Progress

These gleanings from a counselor's notebook have been cited in some detail because Pamela is not unlike many young people whom a leader meets. From these excerpts, is there any evidence that Pamela has progressed since her first interview with the counselor? In evaluating Pamela's progress, and that of anyone else in a counseling situation, the leader will find the following questions helpful:

1. Is the young person's anxiety or distress relieved?

Symptoms themselves, such as Pamela's tantrums, sleeplessness, and tiredness, may become the focus of additional anxiety and concern. While the mere disappearance of distress symptoms is no guarantee that they will not recur, their continued appearance points to a prolonged or losing battle.

2. Does he have a clearer picture of the "presenting problem"? Typically, the basic underlying problem is camouflaged. At the outset, Pamela seemed concerned exclusively with her ambitions to enter Halycon. As the interview progressed, other problem areas were introduced into the picture. At the end of the excerpts just quoted, how might the original problem appear to Pamela? Tenacious maintenance of the original perspective may provide evidence that this defense mechanism is of strategic importance in protecting the youth from some more deeply rooted source of anxiety and inner conflict. Therefore, the feelings and attitudes which Pamela has toward her presenting problem constitute a weather vane that shows which way the wind blows.

3. Has he taken first steps toward working through his problem? How would Pamela's problem be characterized? Can the leader obtain any hints as to what her basic underlying problem might be? What seems to be the key source of conflict as Pamela faces her total life situation? Do her various attacks upon the symptomatic areas of her conflict seem to promise at least the possibility of later more basic changes? What about apparent regression? Pamela's temper tantrums, for in-

stance, may provide a necessary release of pent-up emotion. On the other hand, they may be followed by guilt feelings which induce anxiety because of her failure to measure up to her own standards of behavior. The leader would want to know more about Pamela before making such value judgments.

At this point, the leader really asks three questions in one: Has any progress taken place? Do these first steps affect the youth at the behavioral or the basic personality level? What are the apparent implications of these first steps in so far as eventual outcomes are concerned?

4. *Has he gained greater confidence in self and in others?* The continued personal growth of any young person is necessarily related to the degree of confidence which he has in his own worth, capacities, and abilities. Until he believes that he has inner resources which can be tapped, it is not likely that he will exploit those resources to best advantage. Doubt in one's self is often accompanied by lack of faith in other people. Out of desperation, a young person who feels this way may cling to his counselor. In that clinging there may be an unconscious skepticism, or it may be the means of getting over the feeling that one is unloved and unlovely. Then confidence in others grows, too. The attitudes of others toward us, our feelings about ourselves, and our attitudes toward others are all intertwined. In assessing counseling progress, it is of real importance to note whether confidence in self and in others seems to have improved.

5. *Has he acquired a little more objectivity?* Many young people are crying for the moon in their hopes,

goals, and aspirations. Others have set goals far too limited in view of their resources and opportunities. In either case, both long- and short-term goals tend to gravitate toward a sound middle ground as progress is made in the counseling process. At the outset of counseling, Pamela seemed to feel that the world was coming down around her ears. One sign of progress would be her ability to perceive her problem more objectively. At the end of the sessions reported, how objective does Pamela appear to be as she views herself and her life situation?

6. *Is he becoming more interested in others?* Personality change involves alteration of feelings, concepts, and ideas, which necessarily then become expressed in terms of action. Positive growth as a person implies that the direction of these changes must be outgoing. The hub of the universe for each young person who benefits significantly from counseling gradually shifts from the self to other selves. In her growth as a person, Pamela must gradually interest herself in activities which will benefit others; for it is through meeting the needs of others that each of us finds fuller self-realization.

7. *Is he getting rid of his personal blind spots and inconsistencies?* Pamela was full of inconsistencies in thought, feeling, and conduct. A careful analysis reveals that she had certain blind spots—some aspects of herself and of her associates and of her total life situation which she apparently failed to take into consideration. Each person's inconsistencies and blind spots tend to diminish as he matures. An increasing awareness of these deficiencies is a necessary first step. One must also get insight

into them and be able to take remedial steps. Insight and more stable behavior are achieved only gradually. One may not even be able to express verbally the changes he feels, but the observing leader can usually find evidences of improvement in other forms of personality expressions.

8. *Does he identify himself with the values of our Hebrew-Christian heritage and of our American democracy?* Childhood experiences, intimate family relationships, and cumulative religious patterns determine the relative importance which the historical roots and traditions of our culture hold for each person. The common Hebrew-Christian values are conducive to mental health if they are part of life, if positive feelings are bound up with them. It is upon these same values that our democratic way of life depends. Without identification with our common heritage and future hope as a nation and as a member of the family of nations, the individual is not in step with his fellows. Can any person become a whole person without living on the basis of the values which have been proved best? The question of identification with common values becomes an extremely important consideration for the youth and for the nation.

The first three questions in the evaluation are realistic, and they can usually be answered by any leader who has counseled with a young person. The remaining five questions may demand too much of the leader who is carrying on only brief or intermittent counseling. The nonprofessional, untrained counselor hardly has the background or the time to go so deeply into the problems and personality adjustments of youth. However,

the questions serve to sharpen the leader's observations and his understanding of the confused world in which the youth may live emotionally and mentally.

The leader may want to prepare periodically a thumbnail sketch which summarizes his over-all impressions of the youth and includes any pertinent data. It is difficult to say just when such a summary will be most useful. Some counselors may feel the need of such a review when the youth is approaching a critical decision. A summary of apparent progress is often helpful when the counseling sessions themselves seem to be nearing a crucial stage. A running summary following each interview could be very beneficial if the leader does not make judgments but leaves his mind open. Comparison of analyses following succeeding sessions might show evidences of movement which might otherwise be obscured. No matter what the procedure has been, it does seem logical to make such a summary of a young person's progress as soon as the sessions are terminated. A final summary can be exceedingly helpful in the event of future counseling sessions with this young person.

One final observation should be made about evaluation. What is important is the assessment of apparent personal progress during the process of counseling. Every young person will have many vital contacts with other people during the period of his counseling experience. Pamela, for example, must have been influenced in varying degree by her parents, her friends, her family physician, the school principal, and the biology instructor. The leader can never be entirely certain that his counseling efforts are making the difference that counts

in the life of the young person with whom he counsels. But what of it? It is the growth in the youth's understanding and satisfaction that really matters.

The whole objective in counseling with a young person is to help him to help himself. The leader can consider his time well spent when one young person is on his way more triumphantly.

The Leader Looks at His Counseling Efforts

IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER the leader looked at the youth who came to him for help and asked himself whether he had helped to bring about a solution of the youth's problem, whether he had helped that youth to help himself. In this chapter the emphasis is on you, the leader and counselor, and on your effectiveness as a counselor. Along with other devoted volunteers, you are not a trained counselor; you are far from infallible; you have not always been sure of your handling of youth; your behavior, your character, your past experiences, will sway your judgments and motivations.

There are two mistakes which some inexperienced counselors make frequently: they interview too aggressively and they make incorrect interpretations. Have you made these mistakes?

Listen Well—Avoid Being Aggressive

In a track meet, a football game, or any athletic event, the participants are eager to get off to a fast start, and they strain for the starting signal. Sometimes a participant will jump the gun. The same thing often happens in a counseling interview. Where so many developments in each session are signals for a new course of action, it is understandable that you might move in too fast.

Many professional counselors are convinced that the counselor should never move in at all; they believe that the young person should always carry the ball. Thus, the whole burden of the direction and scope of the counseling interview is, theoretically at least, in the hands of the youth. If you agree with this viewpoint, you can review a counseling session and determine whether you violated your precepts and convictions at any given point. If you believe in varying your role or approach as circumstances dictate, the process of self-analysis becomes a bit more complex.

Every time you move in too fast or inadvisedly take over the interview, you may have to sacrifice that effort and make a fresh start, and both you and the young person must suffer because of your ineptness. How can you tell when this has happened?

When the youth suddenly changed his posture in the course of an interview, what was your own role at the time? Did your attitude, your facial expression, something you said, or some impatient gesture communicate

to the youth your perhaps unconscious feeling that it was time for a change? What about shifts in tempo in his speech and mannerisms? Or abrupt changes in content or direction of the interview? Consider the beginning and end of silent periods to determine whether these developments were due to your own intervention. Analyze the youth's evasions and short cuts for possible evidence that you may have jumped the gun and thereby impeded progress.

In such an instance, you may have made a major blunder by premature introduction of material with which the youth was not prepared to deal. Perhaps there was too much dynamite in the emotional area involved. Your untimely intervention may have provided the young person with an attractive opportunity to scoot off into relatively safe conversational bypaths, away from the tough problem with which he was grappling at the time.

The net effect of barging in or overdirecting the interview may be a slowing down of counseling progress. It is not unusual, when the leader is responsible for an abrupt change in course, for several sessions to be required before the youth returns to the issue originally under consideration. Untimely intervention may also subtly imply that you know best what to do. This tactic may engender such resentment that a strain is placed upon the relationship between you and the young person being counseled. In extreme instances, the youth may fail to return when every indication points to the desirability of continuing the counseling sessions.

In every instance where you feel you moved too fast

for the young person, you probably did so for one or more reasons:

1. You wanted to see the youth get at the root of the problem under discussion.
2. You desired to explore some side issue of special attraction at the moment or one you feared might not come up again.
3. You felt a necessity to strike while the iron was hot.
4. You planned your strategy with the aim of accomplishing certain objectives which seemed important at this time.
5. You felt it necessary to counterbalance the youth's comments with a different frame of reference or point of view (really trying to impose your own ideas).
6. You became ego-involved and felt a need for self-assertion because of your own personal biases and/or insecurities.
7. You became bored or impatient due to your own emotional or physical state, including the pressure of time.

Thus, whenever you feel that you moved too fast, or took over too much, it is important to analyze your motivations for doing so. In this way you can improve your work and make a more effective contribution as a counselor. It is important, too, that you examine the methods or approaches which you used, for you may have tried a method for which this particular youth was not prepared or equipped to accept.

Observe Carefully—Avoid Making Incorrect Interpretations

Everything you do as counselor is based upon your understanding where the youth is in his development

at that time. There will be occasions when your understanding will be too limited, and your interpretations therefore will not be altogether accurate. Sometimes you will erroneously interpret to yourself the youth's thoughts, feelings, and responses, and so you will fail to understand him. The same thing is true when you do not accurately estimate his maturity in various areas. Whether your error be due to distortion of his meaning or failure to assess his depth or range of acceptance of a given notion or idea, the progress of the interview will be affected.

In your search for instances when you have misinterpreted you can employ the checklist suggested in the previous discussion. As you examine the fluctuations in the youth's response, you may possibly find that you have actually blocked the progress of the interview and shaken the faith youth placed in you.

Whenever you misinterpret the comments or the behavior of the young person or miscalculate his readiness, insight, or maturity, your inaccurate analysis is probably due to one or more reasons:

1. You were unable to put yourself in the other person's shoes and view the problem as he sees it.
2. You lacked an intimate acquaintance with the matter under discussion.
3. You did not have a correct understanding of the interpersonal relationships being described.
4. You had been woolgathering and therefore failed to concentrate upon the youth's responses, verbal and non-verbal.
5. You did not allow him to communicate his thoughts

and feelings because you had an ax to grind and were pre-occupied.

6. You lacked sufficient sensitivity, especially concerning the youth's nonverbal responses.

7. You could not recognize evidence which did not conform to your preconceived notions.

8. You were simply not at your best physically and therefore not so alert as usual.

9. You felt that the youth's comments or behavioral expressions were ambiguous and susceptible to various interpretations.

10. You parroted back words, rather than seeking their underlying meanings.

11. You failed to appreciate the real significance of his remarks at the moment he made them.

12. You allowed your personal skills and resources to be taxed by the situation or the problem.

The analysis of your own motivations and other contributing factors is an essential prerequisite to the improvement of your performance and effectiveness as a counselor.

Increase Your Effectiveness

From time to time you will be gratified because your participation in an interview was all that it should be. You apparently chose the right approach, you said the right things, you seemed to help the youth to talk realistically of his problems.

It is seldom difficult to recall those instances when your efforts appeared to be successful, but do not let a few successes lead to generalizations. The same ap-

proach might not be equally useful on another occasion or with another youth. You may find that you work better with certain types of young people, certain problems may prove to be particularly fruitful for you.

When you make mistakes and meet with little success in a certain counseling situation, you may underestimate your relative effectiveness. Here, the eight steps for appraising counseling outlined in the preceding chapter may help you to be more conscious of your own roles. You might remind yourself of the three basic aims of counseling: to understand the young person; to help that young person understand himself; and, the basic objective, to help the youth to help himself. These aims are sometimes accomplished in spite of, rather than because of, the efforts of the counselor. In counseling it is important to gauge efforts in terms of the original objectives. By so doing, unsuspected strengths often appear alongside latent weaknesses which hitherto had escaped your notice. Your general reactions as a counselor may sometimes compensate for the gains or blunders which ordinarily occupy your exclusive attention.

How can you know when you are functioning effectively? You can determine this to some degree by:

1. Reviewing the evidence, according to the criteria suggested in Chapter 7, in an effort to appraise the youth's progress
2. Evaluating the appropriateness of your methods, as suggested in Chapter 6
3. Checking the evidence at hand for clues as to instances when you have taken over too much or made incorrect interpretations

4. Discovering through analysis and synthesis those instances where your counseling efforts seem to have been effective, with resultant progress on the part of the youth
5. Noting the ideas and feelings of those whom you are counseling at present and of young people with whom you have counseled in the past.

Over a period of time, on the basis of a review of your various interviews, a fairly clear picture of yourself as counselor should emerge. This kind of soul-searching and continuous evaluation, as objective as you can make it, will challenge you to better counseling in the future. Your own personal growth is thereby accelerated, and because you are growing yourself, you will find it easier to appreciate and understand the struggles of members of your group when they come for personal counseling.

CHAPTER NINE

The Ethics of Counseling

IN MANY SITUATIONS where his help is sought, the leader has both limitations and obligations. He has limitations because he is not usually a physician, a psychologist, a psychiatrist, or a trained social caseworker. He has obligations because what he can do is sometimes not enough and he must refer the youth to those more capable of handling his special problem—the parents, the family doctor, or a specialist.

Although the leader can often do no more than suggest that the youth seek help elsewhere, he should be aware of the kind of help available and where to send the youth for this help.

Technical Limitations of the Leader

No leader should try to be a professional diagnostician. He should confine his efforts to young people

who are making good or fair adjustments to their life situations. Many functional disorders are beyond the skill, training, and experience of the leader. Thus, a leader should not attempt counseling with persons who show certain danger symptoms but should refer these to competent professionals as soon as possible. Any other course would be hazardous. Moreover, the laws of some states forbid any sort of diagnosis by anyone other than a licensed practitioner.

Persons who need professional help and whose problems are beyond the leader's help include those young people who:

1. Refuse to eat and complain that all food is distasteful
2. Have sensations of tingling or numbness in various parts of the body
3. Have tics (such as twitches of the facial muscles), tremors, or muscular spasms
4. Manifest severe speech disorders or motor disturbances
5. Coin words, speak in a "private" language or in highly confused, disjointed, or illogical fashion
6. Complain of migraine headaches or other chronic ailments
7. Have delusions of grandeur or systematically complain that the world is against them
8. Report hearing strange voices, engage in a display of their sexual organs, or feel they have been designated as a messiah or other special representative of divinity
9. Are disoriented as to time, place, or person
10. Forget familiar events or are confused as to their own identity

11. Assume statue-like poses for extended periods or do not communicate verbally over a forty-eight-hour period
12. Can't say "Methodist Episcopal" and/or show signs of an Argyll Robertson pupil (where the eye does not respond to light, but is able to accommodate to distance)
13. Show marked signs of nystagmus (where the eyes involuntarily shift back and forth rapidly)
14. Are pronounced alcoholics or have a record of uncontrolled homosexual practices
15. Have a recent history of enuresis (bed wetting)
16. Are deeply depressed or toy with the idea of suicide
17. Are extremely agitated, demonstrate violent tendencies, or manifest euphoria (a persistent kind of happiness that does not quite ring true, a bubbling-over)
18. Seem to have no sense of right or wrong
19. Vacillate between gaiety and sadness or have misplaced emotional responses (often evoking expressions opposite to the normal reaction)
20. Report erratic or extreme deviations from the normal menstrual cycle or have a record of glandular disturbance
21. Have a history of epilepsy or have been known to have convulsions or periods of losing consciousness, even momentarily.

This list is by no means complete, but it suggests some of the symptoms in disturbed persons with whom no leader should attempt to counsel.

Making Referrals

Whenever, after a thoroughgoing examination of the situation, it appears that counseling efforts are either ineffectual or a source of potential harm, the leader

should refer the young person to more competent sources of help. When referral is required, the leader will do well (from an ethical as well as a practical viewpoint) to involve his supervisor in the referral proceedings, for the supervisor usually has knowledge of, and contacts with, various specialized resources within the community.

At some point in referral process, the youth and/or his parents may request information about possible resource persons. Many people are not aware that a psychiatrist has had the same training as their family physician, plus additional years of internship in one or more mental institutions whose training programs have met the high standards of the American Medical Association.

There may be confusion concerning the profession of the clinical psychologist. Many states have no licensing arrangements, legally permitting anybody to call himself a psychologist. Therefore, it is important to know that the accredited professional psychologist (who is almost never a physician) has spent a number of years in graduate training, usually culminating in the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy or its equivalent from a recognized university. If he is a clinical psychologist, he has also served an apprenticeship or internship in a mental hospital or similar institution. Accredited psychologists are normally listed in the yearbooks of the American Psychological Association. However certificates of professional competency are issued by the American Board of Examiners in Professional Psychology.

When a leader is instrumental in facilitating a referral he should ask such questions as: How long has the prospective resource person been in the community? What is his general reputation? What is the opinion of those who have consulted him (remembering that clients tend to be biased)? What is the professional worker's reputation in the schools and other community agencies? Is he accessible, in terms of time, money, and distance? Does he have a positive point of view? In addition, the leader would do well to explore the advantages and services offered by available schools, social casework agencies, and other established out-patient facilities.

Many instances of personality maladjustment are of physical origin. The problem which weighs so heavily on the young person may be caused by physical injury or disability, glandular disturbance, or a hundred other ailments. It is natural and proper for the leader, as an adult whose advice is being sought, to suggest that the youth have a medical and physical examination before other forms of help are considered. Behavioral disorders and personality difficulties cannot be expected to clear up if any related physical difficulties are not discovered and treated. The leader is beating his head against a wall if he tries to help a young man by means of thoughtful discussions when what the young man needs is a thorough examination by his physician.

Referral to a physician is extremely important when there is any evidence that the youth is not functioning according to his normal physical capacity; for early medical help may ward off serious ailment or disability.

Many counseling situations can be handled competently by the leader, but every person suffering from disturbance of personality, mental illness, or physical disease should be treated by a specialist.

The Leader's Other Obligations

The leader assumes obligations to the individual who is consulting him, to the parents, to the institution or organization which he represents, to society, and to legal authority when he accepts the confidence of a youth who seeks his help:

1. *The leader has a moral and ethical obligation to give maximal assistance to the individual with whom he works.* This means that he will give of his best in each counseling session and he will keep in confidence everything the youth says. Under all but the most extreme circumstances, he must have the youth's permission before discussing with anyone else anything that has been revealed.

Sometimes the leader is faced with a fine ethical decision. Among professional counselors, there is some difference of opinion as to whether the ultimate obligation is to society or to the individual. Here are two examples: A boy says he is carrying a pistol without a permit. His parents are not aware that he has such a weapon in his possession. The leader does not know, nor does Arthur seem to know, what he proposes to accomplish by carrying the gun around. But he persists in doing so. What should the leader do? The youth is afraid to have his parents know because he is sure that

they would immediately turn him over to the authorities. The leader, from his knowledge of the father, is reasonably sure that the youth's prediction is correct. Furthermore, a criminal record might ruin the boy for life.

Another youth comes to the counseling interview considerably upset. A certain rather promiscuous young lady has become an expectant mother. To the youth's knowledge, any one of five boys may be the prospective father, but all the others have run away from the situation. Larry, overwhelmed with guilt, feels he ought to bear the blame even though he may not be responsible for the young lady's difficulty.

How should a leader handle these situations? Where does his responsibility begin and end? Should he tell the parents, legal authorities, a social worker? Should he keep the confidence of youth and tell no one?

2. Virtually all the young people with whom the leader counsels are minors. Therefore, *the leader has a moral and legal obligation to bring the parents into the picture when their child is in serious difficulty*. When a youth refuses to give permission to notify his parents, the leader may have to tell him that he has no alternative. Never, however, should a leader contact parents without the youth's foreknowledge, if that contact means divulging information which has been given in the confidence of a counseling session.

Even in less critical situations, where the leader feels that it is important to obtain parental co-operation in working through a problem, he may have to inform the youth that unless he grants permission to see his parents,

the leader has no alternative but to break off the counseling relationship. This is a last resort, since such an action could conceivably discourage a young person from seeking help just when he needs it most.

The leader is at no time legally or even morally invested with the right to operate as though he were the parent. He is treading on thin ice whenever he deliberately conspires against, or attempts to serve as a substitute for, a young person's own parents. It is more helpful to cultivate a friendly relationship with parents all along the way. It may be difficult for the leader to approve of some parents' attitudes and modes of behavior, and his sympathy for the youth may cause the leader to feel that the youth is getting a raw deal at home. The leader can only do his best to help both the young person and his parents to reach better adjustments to each other and to the issues and problems at hand.

3. *The leader has a moral and ethical obligation to the institution under whose auspices he serves.* Despite his responsibility to the youth, the leader should not hide from his immediate supervisor any information which is sure to break into headlines. Whenever a leader finds himself in such a predicament, he can try to show the young person the advantages of procuring assistance beyond the leader's personal resources.

4. *The leader has an obligation to society.* For the aim of all counseling is to make the individual a better member of the society of which he is a part. Young people engaged in criminal activity need help beyond what can be provided by the lay counselor. If the leader lets

a youngster walk out of an interview to commit illegal acts, the leader becomes in the eyes of the law an accessory before the fact.

The leader must consider the youth's reputation, his own reputation, the reputation of the institution he serves, and the general welfare of society.

5. *The leader has an obligation to legal authority when it appears that the youth may be involved in illegal activities.* According to current statutes in most states, a clergyman, a doctor, or a lawyer is not obliged, nor may he be compelled, to testify in court when to do so is not in the best interests of his client or parishioner. The professional counselor, much less the lay worker, enjoys no such immunity. Thus, when it appears that the youth may be involved in illegal activity, the leader must point this out to him. If he chooses to proceed with the interview, he does so at his own risk. This creates a delicate problem for the leader. On the one hand, he becomes quite involved himself and may someday have to testify against the very young person whom he is trying to befriend. On the other hand, the youth may have no one else to whom he can or will turn for assistance.

One saving factor is that the leader seldom has more than hearsay evidence. Since such evidence is inadmissible in the courts, the leader may be able to avoid giving testimony by his honest statement that all he knows is secondhand information which may not be accurate. Before submitting to intimidation by law enforcement authorities who may be merely doing their

duty as they see it, the leader would do well to seek legal advice in the interests of himself and the youth.

The good leader and counselor is one who knows what his obligations are, who serves fully within his limitations, and directs those who need other forms of help to those agencies or professional workers who can meet those special or added needs.

Growth in Counseling

IN MOST PROFESSIONS it is customary for the practitioner to call in appropriate specialists when he is working on a case with puzzling angles. The leader who acts as a counselor is in even greater need of competent professional help or supervision.

Using Agency Supervision

When a youth presents a problem too big for the leader to handle, it should be passed on to the leader's supervisor or to the staff representative of his organization; they are usually able to contact specialists. The leader and his group have a place in the total agency picture, and the leader's actions cannot be divorced from the agency. The professional staff and the volunteer workers are engaged in teamwork; they can discuss,

plan together, and share the making of decisions regarding the problems of any youth, so that the goals and results are within the scope of the agency.

The leader's supervisor can often give valuable help on problems of youth. Through his association with the supervisor, and with other leaders who are acting as counselors, the leader can draw upon a reservoir of technical training and life experience.

Learning through Study Groups

The study of people and personalities is a fascinating one—a study that never ends. Anyone who attempts to act as a counselor should develop his powers of observation and learn as much as he can from sharing interests and work with other people.

All leaders can enlarge their understanding of people by taking advantage of informal coffee breaks and spontaneous conferences with young people. However, the organized study group affords the best way of adding to the leader's understanding of young people *in general* so that he may better understand the *particular* youth who seeks his counseling.

Such a study group is made up of adults who are seriously interested in doing a better job of counseling with youth. Members might be adults from the same neighborhood, from the same agency, from the same church. The advantage of meeting as a group is important; for resource persons or professional persons often can meet with a group when they would not spend the time with an individual leader. Study groups might

read and discuss books on counseling, invite resource people to speak, meet with other groups, and work together in a clinic or workshop on counseling. Whatever such a study group does, it is helping adults to understand young people and thus providing more competent counselors for young people.

Making Use of Community Resources

Any leader who acts as a counselor should know what resources he can call upon for help. He thinks first, perhaps, of the church, the schools, or the agency with which he is associated. There are also the social welfare council, the community chest, the officers of the children's and domestic relations courts, the family service and welfare agencies, religious groups, diagnostic and remedial clinics, and perhaps other agencies where he can secure help and advice. As the leader surveys the resources in his community he can keep in mind people to meet with his group, people who can contribute to parent and community meetings, people who can help in in-service training programs or conferences or workshops.

The leader should be aware of what other organizations are doing in training leaders to act as counselors. There are church conferences and youth agency conferences whose main interest may parallel the leader's. Perhaps he can attend such a conference, or at least read the report of the sessions.

He can gain helpful information from many radio and television programs, from newspapers and maga-

zines, from library research, from his courses in college or evening school. Beyond the borders of his own community he can get help from such agencies as: Adult Education Association, American Association of Group Workers, Anti-Defamation League, Child Study Association, National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States, Commission on Pastoral Services, National Council on Family Relations, National Society for the Study of Education, state departments of education, state and national denomination and agency headquarters, United States Government Printing Office, United States Office of Education, United States Public Health Service.

There are countless other sources from which the leader can obtain help in understanding young people and understanding himself.

The Challenge of Counseling

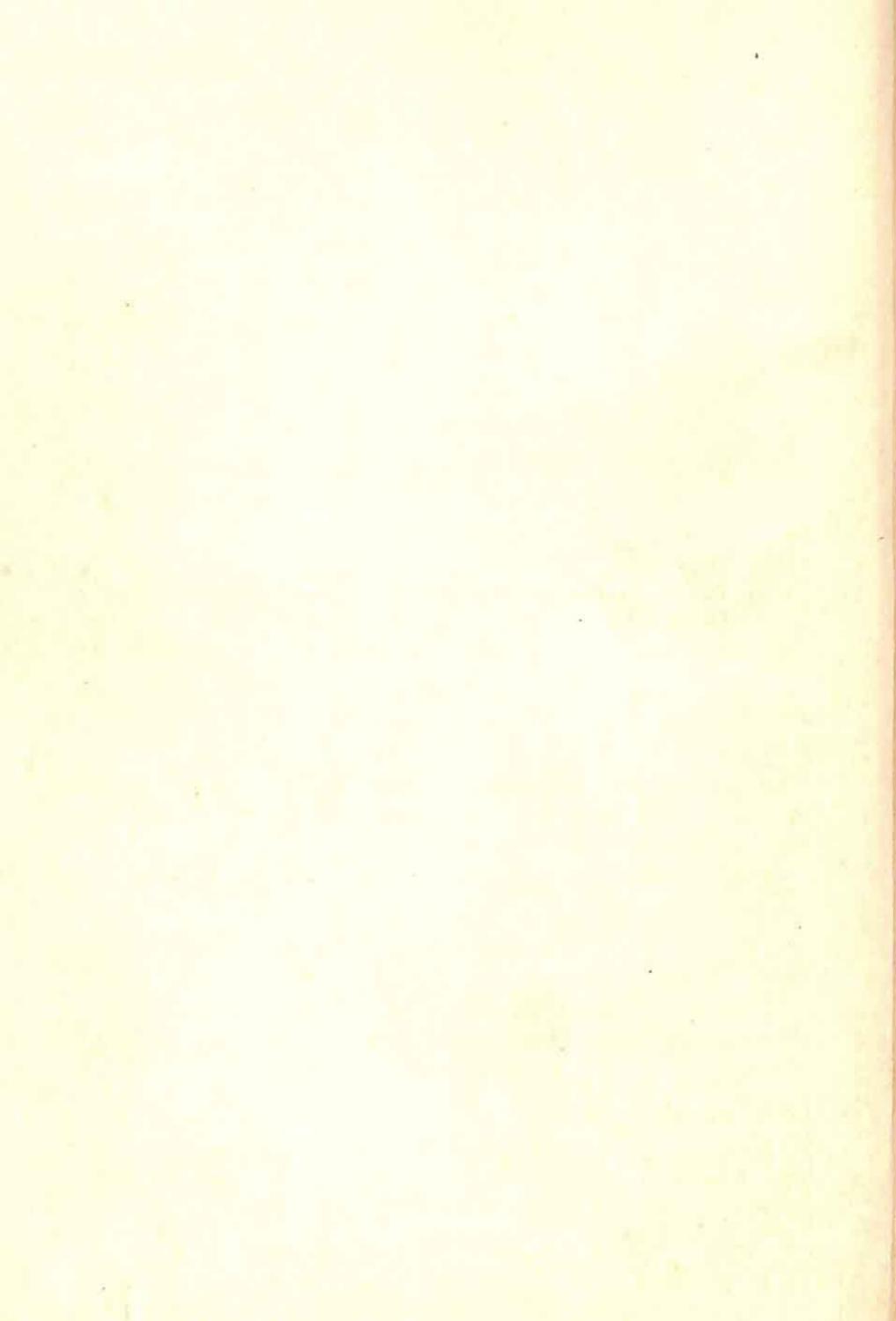
Counseling has as its chief aim the release of personal potential and the establishment of conditions that facilitate the personal growth of the youth, and the privilege of intimate sharing in the individual's growth provides one of the greatest sources of joy and satisfaction to those who are group leaders and counselors.

Counseling by laymen is becoming more insightful. Lay counselors want to know more about the actual dynamics of personality and the interplay of forces, internal and external, which contribute to personal growth. They want to acquire the attributes and skills which will effectively improve their work with youth in

the group setting and in individual counseling sessions. More and more volunteer workers are becoming aware of the counseling opportunities in long-term service with a given group of young people.

As each leader strives to grow as a counselor, he has one great assurance—he does not stand alone. There are others who are helping youth to solve problems and therefore are helping to solve some of the problems of this age. The leader who is a good counselor can often help a boy or girl to bridge the gap from sorrow to happiness, from hesitancy to self-confidence, and from loneliness to friendly give-and-take. There are millions of young people eager to be helped on their way to a fuller life.

This is the challenge.



Notes

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

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² Harry Stack Sullivan, *Conceptions of Modern Psychiatry* (Washington, D.C.: William Alanson White Foundation, 1947), p. 21.

³ Anne Anastasi and John P. Foley, *Differential Psychology: Individual and Group Differentiation in Behavior* (rev. ed.; New York: Macmillan Company, 1949), p. 189.

⁴ Gardner Murphy, *Personality* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), p. 824.

⁵ James S. Plant, *The Envelope* (New York: Commonwealth Fund, 1950), p. 29.

⁶ Daniel A. Prescott, ed., *Emotion and the Educative Process* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1938), pp. 60-61.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

¹ Frederick Kiefer Merry and Ralph Vickers Merry, *The First Two Decades of Life* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 46.

² Robert M. Goldenson, "Why Boys and Girls Go Wrong or Right," *Parents' Magazine*, May, 1951.

³ Sheldon Glueck and Eleanor Glueck, *Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency* (New York: Commonwealth Fund, 1950), p. 287.

⁴ Arnold L. Gesell and Frances G. Ilg, *Infant and Child in the Culture of Today* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1943), p. 139.

⁵ Alexander Reid Martin (psychiatrist, Children's Society, New York), in panel presentation at National Campfire Girls' Leadership Conference, New York, April, 1952.

⁶ Arthur T. Jersild, classroom lecture, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, November, 1951.

⁷ Nathaniel Cantor, *Dynamics of Learning* (2d ed.; Buffalo, N.Y.: Foster and Stewart Publishing Corporation, 1950), p. 79.

⁸ Robert J. Havighurst, *Developmental Tasks and Education* (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1950), pp. 30-63.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

¹ Quoted by Helen Evangeline Riis, *A Psychology of Artistic Creation* (New York: Teachers College Bureau of Publication, Columbia University, 1942), p. 334.

A Counseling Situation: Face to Face with Larry

IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES, a counseling situation is presented by way of illustration of some of the principles set forth in earlier chapters. Since none of us is perfect in the counseling field, an effort has been made to reproduce a *representative* rather than an advanced example of an interview. A young person, Larry, is being interviewed by his leader. The interview is interspersed with analysis and interpretation. In the body of the analyses, numbers enclosed in parentheses refer to pages on which the principles cited are presented in more detail.

The Leader Prepares for the Interview

Four days before the interview, when Larry suggested he'd like to talk over a personal matter, his leader made

a dinner date with him for Friday night, with the understanding that they would join the rest of the gang for bowling at 7:30. In the meantime, the group leader reviewed his notes from the weekly meetings so as to refresh his own memory.

For one thing, there seemed to emerge a pattern of impulsive action—impulsive even for a sixteen-year-old. Larry was highly articulate, but seemed to be more gifted at thinking out loud than thinking things through. Recently, for example, he had strongly advocated an all-male outing and made a strong plea for a party with dates, without stopping for breath or realizing he was contradicting himself. Then there was the occasion when Larry was supposed to buy doughnuts for an after-meeting snack, but came in with chocolate éclairs instead. They'd looked so yummy! The fact that there weren't enough to go around was something else again. But that was Larry, the leader reflected with a grin. And it was also just like Larry to offer to go back and remedy things by investing his personal allowance for the week in additional éclairs.

Aside from this sort of thing, he seemed to be pretty much like any other healthy boy of his age. His school marks were about average, but that didn't seem to worry Larry one bit. In bowling, for example, Larry wasn't spectacular either. He made more noise than most, and put himself into every shot. But if he split the pins, he just laughed and cheered the next man on. However, his leader reflected, the evening he had been the conspicuously poor bowler, Larry had obviously been a very unhappy lad. His tall, lanky form had drooped

even more than usual, and Larry kept working his fingers in and out, a characteristic mannerism when he was worried or anxious.

Across the table at dinner, when the two chatted about sports and the weather and the latest project of their youth group, his leader noticed that between courses Larry's fingers were weaving their telltale tapestry, silently signaling that the lad was inwardly unhappy despite his smiling face and debonair manner. The meal over, at the leader's suggestion they adjourned to a quiet corner of the lounge where they were not likely to be interrupted.

COUNSELOR: (*Glancing at watch*) "Well, Larry, it looks like we've got just about half an hour before time to leave. Now when you spoke to me the other night, I said to myself, that Larry's quite a boy, but he sure does have something of a problem! H-m-m-m. To tell you the truth, though, I've thought about this thing two or three times since, but for the life of me I can't seem to remember exactly what it was you wanted to talk about— Could you give me a little hint, huh? Gee, wonder what's getting into me lately—just the other day my wife asked me to run an errand for her—pick up a pair of pinking shears, you know that kind that make zigzag edges so the material doesn't ravel—they had 'em on sale too—and when I forgot about it, my wife was fit to be tied—you know how women are. Well, anyway, to get back to your problem, I said to myself if Larry wants to go to all the trouble to ask for a—what shall we say—heart-to-heart

talk as it were—it's bound to be something's eating him. Well, here we are! (*Gives an artificial laugh*) What can we do for you?"

LARRY: (*Fingers weaving*) "Uh—h. (*Looks around the room*) It's sure nice here, isn't it? Sort of reminds me of some place way up in— Golly, it was nice of you to take all that interest, Mr. Barnes, but gosh, I'm not sure I really—(*Bends over and reties shoe laces*) Excuse me. Well, like I was saying, this is really quite a place. You know my mother has a pair of those, what do you call 'em, pinking shears. The other week my kid sister tried to use 'em on our pooch—what a riot! Did you ever have a kid sister, Mr. Barnes? They can be an awful nuisance sometimes—I guess I don't really mean it that way, 'cause she's really just as cute as— Golly, Mr. Barnes, I don't see how you ever find time to do all the things you do, what with—but then some of the kids are griping because it seems like you're always busy—"

COUNSELOR: (*Somewhat defensively*) "Well what do they think I do for a living, play tiddlywinks? (*Seems to realize his own touchiness—he has been busy lately*) Oh well, Larry, you know how it is. This has been a busy time the last couple of months, a regular rat race, that's what it was!"

LARRY: "Yes sir!"

COUNSELOR: "Not that I'm complaining! Not me! Best March in our history, yes siree! But thank goodness that's over, and now I can get down to what really

counts, my work, if you can really call it that, with you guys."

ANALYSIS

The leader got off to a good start in his opening sentence, by letting Larry know how much time was left, and thereby encouraging him to focus on the problem which had brought them together. Immediately, however, he is guilty of having forgotten Larry's presenting problem, a development which is bound to disconcert Larry and discourage him from going farther. His next remark is an uncalled-for personal reference which can only have the effect of carrying Larry still farther away from his problem. The leader becomes aware of his digression and tries to rectify matters; but he may be exaggerating, or contributing to Larry's exaggeration in his own mind of the problem at hand. And his question—"What can we do for you?"—may be interpreted by Larry as patronizing in tone, introducing still another impeding element. Had the leader followed his first statement by suggesting that Larry must have been thinking over things during the last few days and inquired whether he would still like to talk about it, the young man might not have been blocked, as evidenced in his reply. Also note how Larry seizes on the diversion introduced by Mr. Barnes and thus carries the discussion even farther afield. Then, perhaps unconsciously, Larry turns to the topic of the leader himself, a natural outgrowth of Mr. Barnes's question. This tactic is additional evidence of the resistance shown by Larry. When Mr. Barnes speaks again, he compounds the problem by

reacting defensively, and then compensating by inviting sympathy from the counselee. Larry's brief "Yes, sir!" reflects the very inferior position into which Mr. Barnes has maneuvered him in the course of the discussion. The leader attempts in the lines which follow to bring the discussion back to the problem, but pauses enroute to boast, at least indirectly, of his own personal achievements. In reality, Mr. Barnes has once more directed attention to himself and away from the young person.

LARRY: "Well, gee, Mr. Barnes, I didn't mean to—that is to say— Anyway, all the fellows appreciate the way you— You know something, we were really worried for a while; we thought maybe you wouldn't be able to keep on meeting with us, now that you got your big promotion and all— Hank's mother told my mother she didn't see how you ever did all the things you have— Gee, you even belong to a luncheon club, don't you? That's a swell pin you're wearing! Is that a genuine diamond?"

COUNSELOR: "Oh, that? Well, I guess so. But it's only a tiny one, eh? You don't have to do much digging for one *that* size. (*Laughs enormously at his own joke*) Guess a fellow has to work pretty hard at that— (*Here, the leader checks himself just as he is about to embark upon a long account of the occasion on which he was awarded his service pin*)

LARRY: "Yes sir! I'm sure you do!"

COUNSELOR: "But you know what, Larry, I was really thinking about how much you and the other guys do for

our club. You're really quite a gang. Really that's why we're having dinner together tonight. So we can sort of let down our hair and talk about things that really matter. The way I see it, it's really my job to help you fellows help yourselves. And, come to think of it, it's getting late, and if we're going to talk about Larry and his situation, I reckon we'd better be getting at it, eh? We can talk about other matters most any old time, but right now the important thing is what you want to talk about—”

ANALYSIS

Larry continues to talk about the leader, largely due to Mr. Barnes's earlier tactical error. Then the leader for the first time becomes aware of the difficulty, just when he was about to compound the problem. Although he does it perhaps too abruptly, Mr. Barnes tries to structure the interview by clarifying his own role and encouraging Larry to talk about the real reason for their meeting.

LARRY: “Well— Gee, I don’t know whether it’s anything so very important— It’s just that— Aw, I dunno, I’m just kinda mixed up, I guess— (Here, there is a long pause, punctuated by the almost imperceptible movement of Larry’s fingers) Aw, I don’t know how to say it, but I get myself in the darndest messes!”

COUNSELOR: “You feel like you’re in a bit of a jam, and things aren’t—”

LARRY: "You said it! I seem to be getting it from all sides, and I just can't seem to figure out—" (*Another long pause, while Larry looks quite despondent*)

COUNSELOR: "Well, lots of folks get into situations like that. Why, when I was your age, I thought the world was coming down around my ears many and many a time."

LARRY: (*Resentfully*) "Yeah! But you're different. Everybody's different! Naw, that's not what I mean. It's just that I can't ever be like you or my dad or anybody that amounts to— Oh well, that's life, I guess. Or so they say!"

ANALYSIS

Larry demonstrates the struggle he faces as he attempts to share his problem. Note that the leader wisely refrained from interrupting at this point. When he speaks, he attempts to reflect Larry's feelings about his situation. After Larry's reply and the long pause, Mr. Barnes probably meant to reassure Larry, but in reality the leader's own personality needs again dominate the picture. Thus, although Larry's next reply tells a great deal about his own self-concept, the net result is that the interview has now assumed a highly negative tone.

COUNSELOR: (*After a brief pause*) So-o-o— Tonight you're feeling pretty low, and don't think very much of Larry either, do you?"

LARRY: "Aw, I wouldn't say that, exactly! After all, I get by all right at school, and all that!"

COUNSELOR: "Sure you do! On the one hand, you feel you're doing pretty well, but in some other ways, things seem kinda messed up, eh?"

ANALYSIS

The leader's attempt to clarify Larry's thoughts and feelings may be accurate enough, but the reply is too blunt, and in an area which Larry cannot readily talk about as yet. When the youth comes out with a face-saving reply, the leader does a good job of restating his reflected comment in terms which Larry can more readily accept.

LARRY: "Yeah. I guess so. And it just seems like I'm always getting into some kind of mess. Remember that night I bought those chocolate éclairs and all the guys — But, anyhow, I really wanted to ask about a matter of business—"

COUNSELOR: "You have a business problem, do you? Why don't you tell me about it?"

LARRY: "Well— (*About a twenty-second pause*) If a fellow doesn't put any money up, he really hasn't bought anything, has he?"

COUNSELOR: "Technically speaking, no. Unless there was some other consideration. You've got to have something on the line to make it a contract."

LARRY: "Then Carl really doesn't have any real reason to claim that I gypped him, does he?"

COUNSELOR: "Maybe I ought to know more about this deal of yours. And, by the way, who's Carl anyway? Do I know him?"

ANALYSIS

Larry finally gets into the presenting problem, so the leader encourages him to continue. In his next response, the leader answers the direct question which Larry poses, and next asks a question himself.

LARRY: "Aw, he's a kid in my class at school. Carl Landrum. Lives out in the Heights, with all them bluebloods and ritzy people. But Carl's a regular guy. I like him a lot! (*The leader waits for Larry to continue*) So-o-o—to get down to cases, I—I— Well, you see it was like this. Carl and me—Carl and I saw this second-hand motor bike in the window of Thompson's Hardware Store, and so we went in to see how much they wanted for it. It was a swell number, all right, but it looked like a lot of money to lay out just to fool around with. But it didn't seem like too awfully much to Carl, and I guess the man knew Carl's dad, 'cause when he found out Carl really liked the job he told Carl he could think it over and he'd hold it for him 'til three o'clock Monday afternoon—"

COUNSELOR: "So the store held the motor bike for Carl, so he could talk to his dad about it?"

LARRY: "Uh—huh. So, anyway, I guess maybe Carl couldn't make up his mind or sump'n. Anyway, I got to figuring out how— You know how it is, a fellow's

got to— Well, I got to thinking about how I would need a job this summer, and what would I do, and gosh that sure was a swell motor bike! So I talked to 'Doc' Bonquist over at the drugstore, and asked him if he could use a boy this summer to make deliveries out to Green Acres, that big new development out on the main highway near the furniture factory, you know?"

COUNSELOR: "Oh yeah. Pass it every day! Quite a place! It sure beats all how this town is growing! Why, only a few years back that was all just wide open fields—nothing there at all but some hills and gullies!"

LARRY: "Well, anyway, 'Doc' Bonquist kinda looked at me over his glasses like and said, sure he could use somebody, but how did I think I could do it, on roller skates—so then I told him I might get a motor bike and he said that's the ticket, that would do it, funny he hadn't thought of that himself. So-o-o—I talked to Dad about the bike and he said he would loan me the money if I was sure I had the job lined up, and I had the job all right, so-o-o— Anyway, I worried myself sick all week end, that was two week ends ago, and—"

COUNSELOR: "You were afraid Carl would decide to get the bike and leave you high and dry?"

ANALYSIS

When Larry mentions Green Acres, the leader once again introduces a digression which properly should

have been omitted. However, his next response ingeniously reflects feeling and at the same time encourages Larry to get on with this background material.

LARRY: "You said it! And so I bought the bike when Carl didn't show up to get it, and now he's mad at me and says I stole it out from under him."

COUNSELOR: "Why the dirty low-down so-and-so! If he were here I'd tell him a thing or two. Business is business! If he couldn't make up his feeble mind, it's just too bad!"

LARRY: "But, Mr. Barnes, you just don't understand. I-I-I— Well, I didn't tell my father that Carl was interested too, and when I told him about it, he didn't like it at all!"

COUNSELOR: "What did he think you should do, get a written letter of permission from Carl what's-his-name?"

LARRY: "Well, no. Not exactly that. But Dad's got the idea that it would have been more open and above board if I had— Well, if I had at least called Carl up and asked him what he— Oh well, what's the use of talking about it? I told you things are a mess!"

ANALYSIS

When the leader first speaks, he is anything but objective and nonjudgmental (page 72). The same fault is repeated in his next remark—this time much more seriously, because the leader is taking sides with the boy

against his father. Note that Larry cannot go along with the leader wholeheartedly at this point.

COUNSELOR: "Hm-m-m-m. So what happened besides? It sounds like a bit of a situation all right, and I can see how you feel that you're in a jam, all right. But I don't see what's so awful about it."

LARRY: "Well, I guess you don't understand. Maybe nobody does. I guess I don't understand it myself. Gee, it's almost time for us to leave for the bowling alley, isn't it?"

COUNSELOR: "Oh, I suppose so. But we've got a few minutes yet. I really think we ought to get to the bottom of this thing. Somehow there seems to be more to this situation than meets the eye! So what did your father say to you, anyway?"

LARRY: "Oh, nothing much. Just said he was disappointed in me, and that it looked like I'd learn how to use my head once in a while instead of just jumping into things and thinking about it after it was too late."

COUNSELOR: "And that bothers you for your dad to be disappointed in you?"

LARRY: "Yeah. In a way. Not that he's so perfect himself, you understand. Oh, he's always— Once in a while, though— Well, you know how it is—"

ANALYSIS

"But I don't see what's so awful about it." Note how the leader makes a value judgment, so that Larry's next

response reveals the boy's let-down feeling and impulse to leave the counseling session. The leader's next two responses, thanks to the relationship established in previous contacts with Larry as a group member, serve to bring the interview back into equilibrium.

COUNSELOR: "H-m-m-m—huh—"

LARRY: "So I guess Dad's really not down on me for keeps; he can be an understanding sort of a guy when he wants to be—"

COUNSELOR: "You feel that sometimes your father really understands you, and that other times—"

LARRY: "Well, I guess you could put it that way. It sort of leaves a fellow— Well, how's a guy to know— It sort of leaves ya—"

COUNSELOR: "Up in the air, does it Larry? You're not too sure just how he'll react to specific situations, is that it?"

LARRY: "Aw, I dunno. Lots of other kids have the darnest time trying to— But, gosh, Dad's really done everything he could to make things easier for us than it was for him—that's what Mother's always saying, anyway. And I guess it's so, come to think of it."

COUNSELOR: "So in many ways, you feel your father's right in there pitching, so when you feel you've let him down, you feel—"

LARRY: "Awful!"

ANALYSIS

The leader seems to be more cautious now. He is non-committal rather than making a value judgment which would be wrong whichever way he expressed his own feelings. When he does speak, he is reflecting and helping clarify feelings (pages 72, 74). His last remark reveals a particularly useful technique, whereby he leaves his own response in midair, encouraging Larry, who frequently fails to complete his own sentences, to supply the response indicating his real feelings in this matter.

LARRY: "But that's not all."

COUNSELOR: "Carl! He's madder than a wet hen, I imagine."

LARRY: "Aw, him! You should worry about him! Do you know what his father did? Sent away to Chicago for a brand new motor bike—the snazziest model you ever saw! Boy, it would knock your eye out. He showed me the picture yesterday— It just oozes with chrome and gadgets—practically jet-propelled—smooth — Gee, what a rig! Makes my little old second-hand job look like a pile of junk. Gee, some guys get all the breaks!!"

COUNSELOR: "So he's got a dream boat—a dream train—or something like that?"

LARRY: "Just a dream, that's all."

COUNSELOR: "I see—"

ANALYSIS

The leader jumps to conclusions too quickly when he expresses an opinion about Carl. He decides to wait out the young man, even though he can't fathom the real problem insofar as Carl is concerned.

LARRY: "So, I guess that's about all there is to it. (*The leader waits while the seconds tick, so Larry begins to feel just a bit uncomfortable, and again assumes the initiative*) Well—I reckon there is more to it too, but then maybe it's not so important to talk about—"

COUNSELOR: "Now see here, Larry, if it's important to you, it's important enough to talk about. Who else would know what's important? This is your time to use in whatever way you think best! The few minutes we have left, at least."

LARRY: "Well, since you put it that way— Well-l-l— (*Begins to weave his fingers in and out*) Mr. Barnes, were you ever in love?"

COUNSELOR: "Was I what? (*Laughs nervously*) Well, what do you think?"

LARRY: "I guess maybe you were—excuse me, I mean will be—I mean are—"

COUNSELOR: "But what's this got to do with you and Carl and the bike? Or has it?"

LARRY: "Oh, nothing. It was just a silly kind of question, that's all. But that sure is one honey of a bike Carl's getting for his birthday! Boy oh boy!"

ANALYSIS

Larry's telltale mannerism of weaving his fingers in and out reappears, suggesting that he may be getting at his more basic problem area—something much deeper than his presenting problem, which was a question about business. This is confirmed when Larry changes to a much safer topic of discussion. Note, too, that the leader's question—"But what's this got to do with you and Carl and the bike? Or has it?"—was too abrupt, putting Larry on the defensive. The leader himself does not appear to be too sure of his ground, as evidenced by his nervous laugh when Larry asks him if he was ever in love.

COUNSELOR: "Hm-m-m-huh—"

LARRY: "So what does his father do but go and order that snazzy streamlined job for Carl and all the time his sister is acting like I stole sheep when Carl didn't even want that old bike we saw in the window at Thompson's."

COUNSELOR: "His sister, eh?"

LARRY: "Yeah. That Vivian can go and sit on a tack, that's what she can. But she hadn't ought to go around telling everybody I'm a louse when her brother didn't even want that—"

COUNSELOR: "So you're really concerned because Vivian is telling everybody—"

LARRY: "Aw, it's not that she tells *everybody*! It's just—It's just—It's just not right—"

COUNSELOR: "Something's not right about it—"

LARRY: "Naw. But anyway Carl's not mad at me; it's just that other people get the wrong idea about— But anyway I've got a job lined up for the summer, and Dad'll be happy to see me bringing some money home and maybe Mother can fix up the spare room like she's always wanted to—"

COUNSELOR: "Gee, that ought to be a lot of fun! We just got through finishing off a room in our attic, and boy oh boy, I can tell you that it was some job! Lots of other people would've given it up for a bad job and called in a carpenter but (*laughs heartily and slaps Larry on the shoulder*)—when a Barnes starts a project he finishes it, I can tell ya!"

LARRY: "Yes sir. But you didn't let me finish!"

COUNSELOR: "Oh, I beg your pardon. Guess I got carried away with myself there for a moment. Where were we? Oh yes, you were saying that Vivian—what's her name—Landrum, did you say? This Vivian tells everybody you cut in on her brother's deal when he—"

LARRY: "Like I say, Carl really didn't care, and he's told me so three times already!"

COUNSELOR: "So-o-o?"

ANALYSIS

Once more, when the leader talks about finishing off a room in his attic, he injects his own interest and con-

cerns, followed in this instance by a reprimand from Larry. For this reason, as well as his own reluctance, the youth is treading water rather than proceeding farther.

LARRY: "So then I'll work hard this summer and then maybe everybody—well, Mother and Dad will be glad anyway, and then it won't make any difference if that Vivian goes around blabbing to everybody just because I should've maybe mentioned to Carl that I sorta wanted the second-hand model if he didn't decide— But you can't tell whether everybody will care very much whether—"

COUNSELOR: "Maybe everybody won't see things the way you think your parents will—"

LARRY: "Naw. Anyway, that Vivian needn't be thinking she's so all-fired smart. Just the same, I wish—"

COUNSELOR: "You somehow wish she didn't feel the way she does?"

LARRY: "Yeah—I mean no, sir. I don't. Gosh, I'm all mixed up, just like I said. Just things are a mess."

COUNSELOR: "What Vivian thinks is sort of important to you?"

LARRY: "I'll say!"

COUNSELOR: "H-m-m-m. Could it be that you're kinda sweet on Vivian, maybe?"

LARRY: (*Blushing*) Thunder, no! Why, I wouldn't give her the time of day, and she knows it! What anybody

could see in that girl is beyond me! Take that Tad Monahan, the drip, hanging around her all the time like she was so fragile she needed propping up. Makes a fellow sick to see that sort of stuff going on. Puppy love, my father calls it! Well, he can make a darned fool out of himself if he wants to, but I wouldn't give two cents for flowers for Vivian's funeral!"

ANALYSIS

The leader is doing a creditable job of reflecting Larry's feelings, until he oversteps the mark when he suggests that Larry might be "kinda sweet on Vivian." In this last instance, the leader is very fortunate in that his ill-timed comment inspired Larry to unload his feelings of hostility toward Vivian.

COUNSELOR: "So you wouldn't give this Vivian the time of day, as you say, but you feel that she's an important part of the picture because some other people may be influenced against you, you think?"

LARRY: (*Hesitates*) "Yes, Mr. Barnes, you might say so." (*Larry reties his shoe, swallows a couple of times, becomes conscious of his fingers moving in and out and attempts to conceal them from view*)

COUNSELOR: "Yes, Larry—"

LARRY: "Yeah. (*A full half minute passes*) Well—I tell ya, Mr. Barnes, it's like this. I don't care what Vivian thinks, because she's all wet anyway, but then she runs around with—she runs around with—well, a certain person, you might say—"

COUNSELOR: "I see!"

LARRY: "And, gosh, Mr. Barnes, it's awful! Kath—I mean this certain person—well, it's not that I— But I—Well—" (*Shrugs his shoulders, sits in abject silence*)

COUNSELOR: "In any case, Larry, what this certain person thinks is pretty important to you, and you're afraid—"

LARRY: "Aw, Mr. Barnes, I just feel all mixed up, that's all—"

COUNSELOR: "Mixed up about the way you feel and the way this certain person feels?"

LARRY: "Yeah."

COUNSELOR: "Hm-m-m-m. And this is really the problem you hoped we'd discuss, isn't it?"

LARRY: "No siree! When I came here tonight, I had no idea I'd be talking about Kath—about this certain person, you understand. But can't you see, Mr. Barnes—or can you? When a fellow's kinda tall and gangly, what girl's going to look at him twice? Besides which, I'm just *average!* If I could just be good for *something*, so I could be outstanding in— Not such a big success, you understand, but just so— Well, I don't know why I'm talking to you like this. It's just that things sort of—"

COUNSELOR: "Things sort of piled up on you, did they, Larry? Lots of folks have that experience."

LARRY: "Do they? Gee. I never thought of that. Huh! Well, anyway, it's helped a lot to talk about things, but please don't let anybody know I—"

COUNSELOR: "Oh, of course not. Mum's the word. You can count on that!"

ANALYSIS

It is interesting to note that Larry finally gets around to "this certain person"—a subject he might have touched upon earlier when he said, "But that's not all," had the leader not chosen to strike out down a different trail. Note also when the leader says, "Things sort of piled up on you, did they, Larry? Lots of folks have that experience," he wisely chooses to reflect Larry's final comment, rather than the preceding material, which revealed at least in outline form the youth's most basic underlying conflicts and values. The leader attempts to reassure Larry, so that the young man's problems do not appear unique to him alone. The next response indicates that this assurance was well timed. But note that Larry is fearful that he may have talked too much, and demands further reassurance when he says that it has "helped a lot to talk about things, but please don't let anybody know I—"

LARRY: "Well, I guess that's it, huh? Gee, thanks a lot, Mr. Barnes! You've really helped me a lot."

COUNSELOR: "Well, whatever was accomplished, you're the one who's responsible. However, before we go, Larry, I'm wondering if we could kind of pull to-

gether a few loose ends. To sum it all up, you feel you got into the doghouse with your dad, and with a certain somebody in particular, because you rushed into buying this bike at Thompson's before you were really sure Carl didn't want it. You're anxious to do a good job with Bonquist's this summer so that your mother can maybe fix up that spare room and maybe also a certain somebody will then have a somewhat better—”

LARRY: “Exactly!” (*Fingers weave again*) “But you know, Mr. Barnes, I guess I really feel that I have to prove that I'm the kind of guy who— That I'm the kind of guy who doesn't have to care—who doesn't have to prove— Aw, I'm still a little mixed up, I guess. Gee, Mr. Barnes, could we talk like this again sometime, huh?”

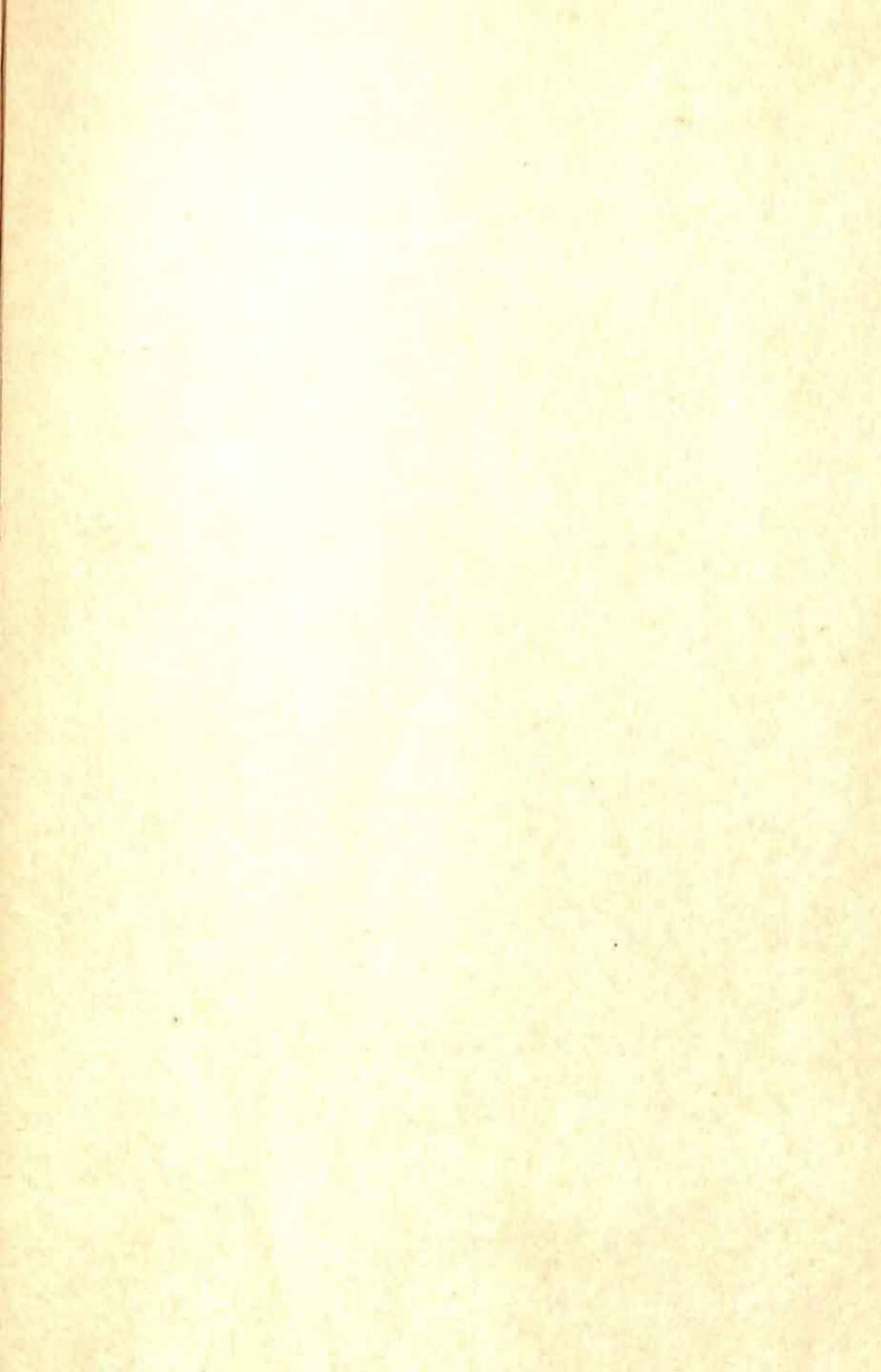
COUNSELOR: “Sure thing, Larry! I'll leave it up to you. It'll be up to you to decide. When you're ready just let me know, and we'll make another point to get together. Well, I guess it's time for us to scoot over to the bowling alley, eh? It's been awfully nice to share, Larry. Let's keep in touch, shall we?”

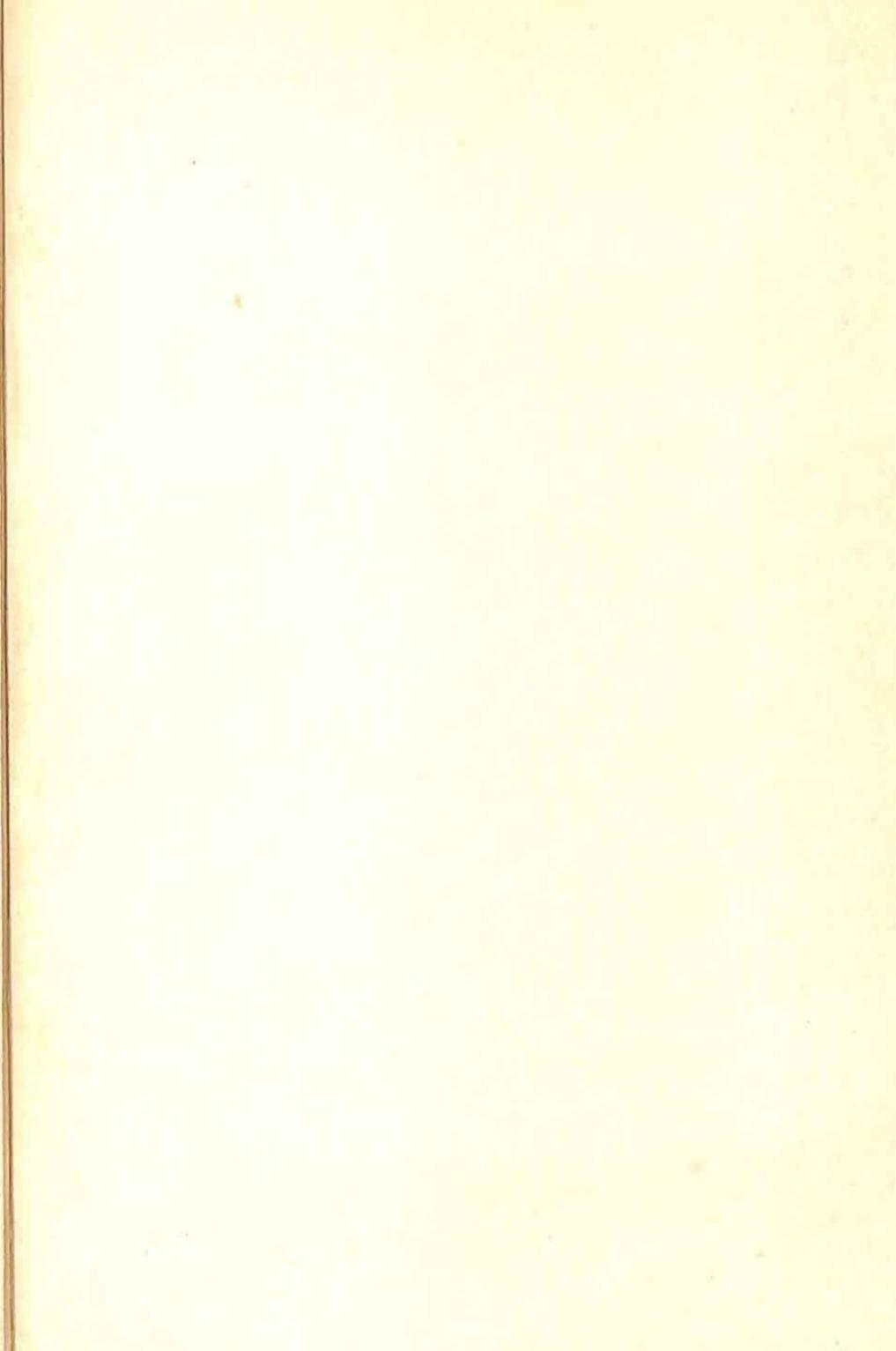
ANALYSIS

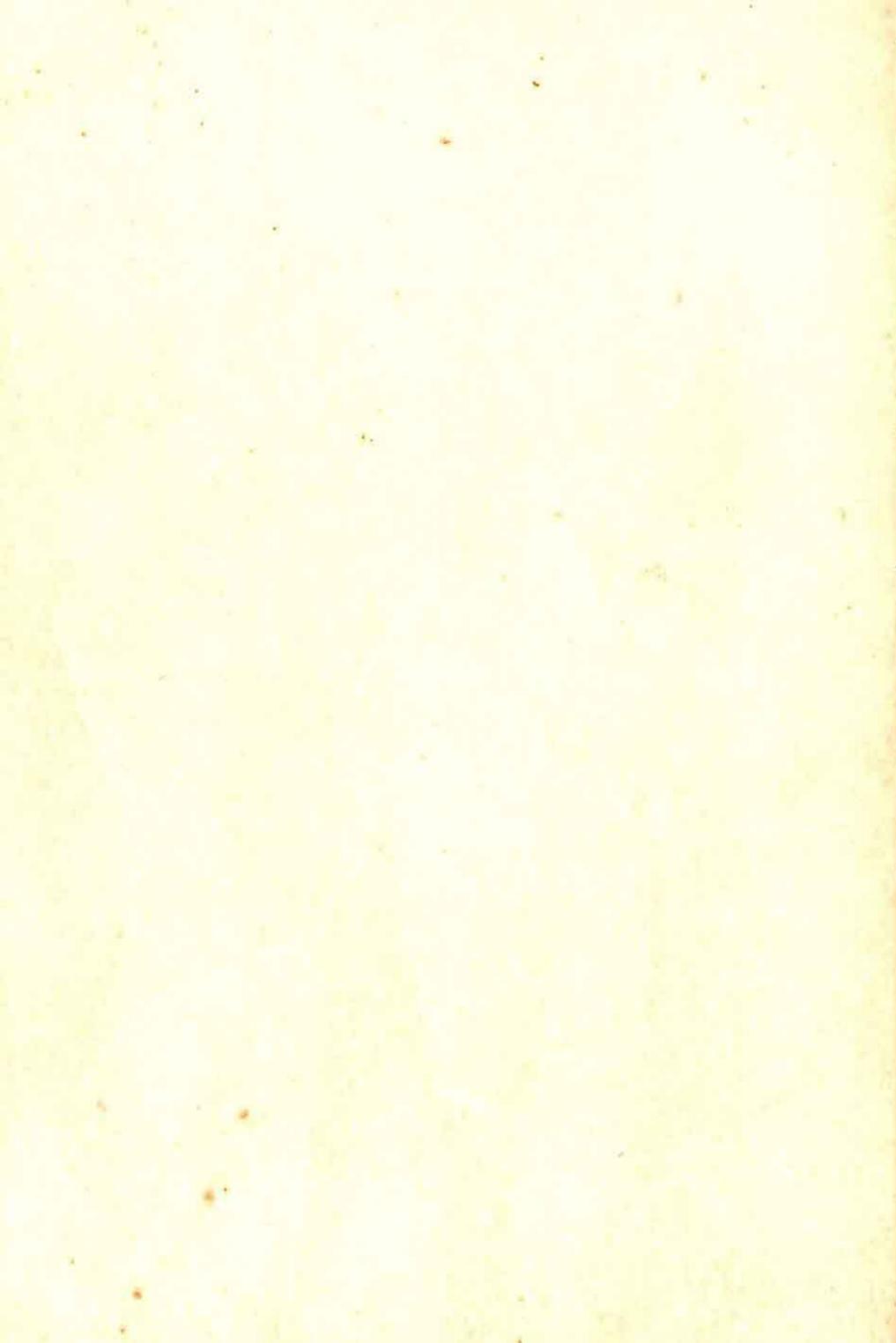
The leader recognizes that Larry is ready to terminate the interview, and that time is up as well. So Mr. Barnes passes the credit back to Larry, and proceeds to sum up the issues discussed so as to leave the youth with a feeling of specific accomplishment. Larry shows that he is on the verge of insight into his real problem

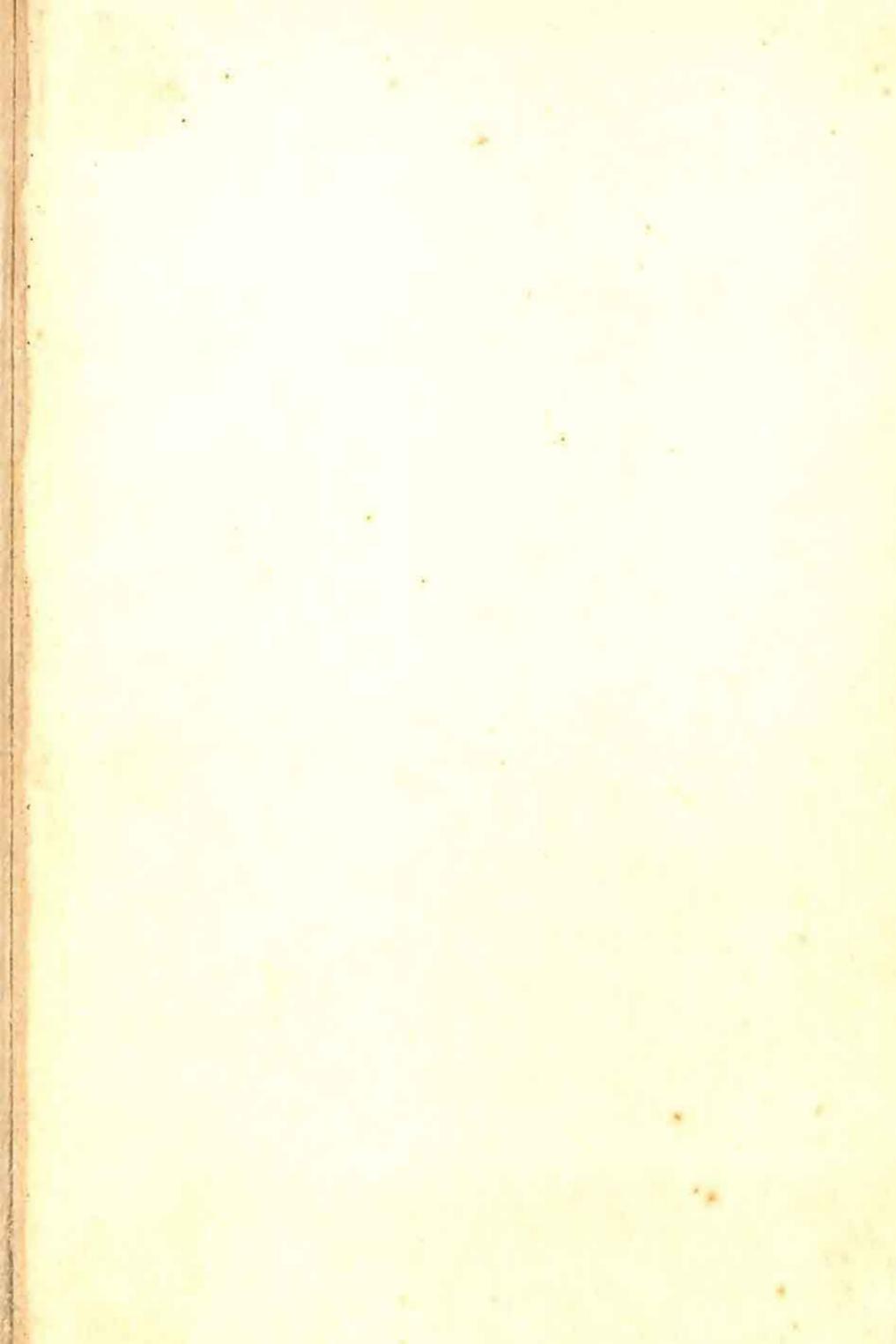
—his need to prove himself to others: his parents, his fellow club members, and to members of the opposite sex. Later perhaps, he will choose to discuss his mixed feelings about a "certain person." In this session, at least, the various elements in Larry's situation have fallen into more objective perspective. What about tomorrow? A lot will depend upon how much Larry—and the leader—grow in the process!











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